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ABSTRACT

Accreditation of early childhood programs helps teachers and administrators evaluate and improve their practice, helps parents make informed decisions, and helps children receive quality programming. This manual explains the policies and procedures for accreditation of early childhood programs through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Following a list of relevant definitions, Part 1 of the manual presents the purpose and goals of NAEYC's accreditation system, eligibility requirements, applications to multisite organizations and to agency and corporate child care systems; and describes the accreditation process of self-study, validation, and the commission decision. Part 2 presents the criteria--with interpretations--for high-quality early childhood programs, including history and development of the criteria, interrelationships among criteria, and how decisions are made. Criteria are presented in the following areas: (1) interactions among teachers and children; (2) curriculum; (3) relationships among teachers and families; (4) staff qualifications and professional development; (5) administration; (6) staffing; (7) physical environment; (8) health and safety; (9) nutrition and food service; and (10) evaluation. The manual's five appendices provide examples of developmentally appropriate practice, handwashing guidelines, nutrition requirements for infants and preschoolers, guidelines for food preparation and service, and the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment. The manual concludes with information about NAEYC and the accreditation fee structure. (Contains 143 references.) (KB)

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Accreditation Criteria & Procedures

of the National Association for the Education of Young Children

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of the
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for the Education
of Young Children

1998 Edition

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of the National Association for the Education of Young Children

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The Role of Accreditation in the System of Early Childhood Education

NAEYC's primary goal is to act on behalf of the needs and interests of young children by providing developmental and educational resources to adults who work with children from birth through age 8. In practical terms, this goal translates into sponsoring activities that are designed to improve the professional practice of early childhood educators and to educate the American public about the importance of good quality early childhood programs. Certainly one of the most ambitious initiatives the Association has ever undertaken to achieve its goals was launching a national, voluntary accreditation system for early childhood programs in 1985.

NAEYC accreditation has grown enormously since its inception and now involves thousands of early childhood schools and centers that represent the broad diversity of types of settings available for young children and their families. Research exists to demonstrate that NAEYC accreditation is a relatively effective strategy for improving program quality and identifying high quality programs for parents, funders, and policy makers (see Bredekamp & Willer, 1996). But it is also clear that the reliability and integrity of NAEYC accreditation decisions can be improved (Bredekamp & Glowacki, 1996; Whitebook, Sakai, & Howes 1997).

Accreditation, like every other quality improvement strategy, operates as part of a larger system. For accreditation to be truly effective in achieving its goals, other aspects of the system must also operate optimally. Accreditation is one level of quality control; the standards are presumably set at the level that represents "good" quality. But accreditation's ability to achieve its goals is influenced by other factors. Most critically, accreditation builds on a basic level of consumer protection that is represented by state facility licensing standards (Morgan, 1996). This level of quality control is designed to prevent harm, to ensure that any program that does not provide basic health and safety protections for children does not operate. Licensing of facilities sets a floor of quality below which it is illegal to operate. To be eligible for accreditation, programs must be licensed and in good standing. When state licensing standards and monitoring systems are inadequate to prevent harm to children, it becomes extremely difficult for accreditation to function properly. Therefore, NAEYC strongly supports the need for effective systems of early childhood program licensing (NAEYC, 1997).

But accreditation's effectiveness also depends on other systems functioning optimally. For instance, good quality programs require well-qualified teachers and administrators. Therefore, systems of professional preparation and ongoing professional development are essential to provide sufficient numbers of qualified

personnel to fill the positions in programs. The self-study portion of accreditation is a valuable training tool for staff, but it is insufficient to compensate for the lack of a professional preparation system. In other fields, professionals must obtain some sort of license or certificate to practice and accreditation requires specified numbers of licensed personnel. Such a requirement is premature in early childhood education where personnel licensure is only available in most states for elementary school teachers. Even without a formal licensure system, however, individuals must be adequately prepared through higher education.

Perhaps most essential to ensuring the viability of a system like accreditation is adequate funding for high quality early childhood programs. Research now documents that recruitment and retention of well-qualified early childhood teachers is heavily dependent on adequate compensation (Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1989; Whitebook, Sakai, & Howes 1997; Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Team, 1995; Willer, 1990). Staff who are more adequately compensated in terms of salaries, benefits, and working conditions are more likely to remain on the job and to provide better quality care and education for young children. Accreditation cannot dictate staff salaries, but program administrators seeking accreditation must recognize that a fundamental ingredient to achieving and maintaining the level of program quality reflected in accreditation is attention to improving staff compensation.

Finally, to achieve the public support necessary to ensure adequate systems of regulation, professional preparation and development, and financing–greater public awareness and consumer demand is required. Parents need to be educated about what high quality programs look like and what kinds of resources they require. Likewise, funders (whether private or public) and policy makers at every level must be committed to providing the kinds of resources both financial and political that are needed to ensure that a supportive context exists for early childhood programs.

When accreditation works well, it has tremendous power for good. Accreditation of early childhood programs helps teachers and administrators evaluate and improve their practice and helps parents make informed decisions. But most of all, accreditation helps children. In the future, families should have the option to choose, from among many accredited programs, the one that best matches their needs and goals for their children.

–Sue Bredekamp
NAEYC Director of Professional Development and Accreditation

Definitions

Academy—the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, the division of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) that administers the accreditation system.

Administrator—person most responsible for the on-site, ongoing, daily supervision of the program and staff. The terms *administrator* and *director* are used interchangeably throughout these materials.

Centers—See definition of *Program*.

Chief administrative officer—person legally responsible for the business operation of the program. This person may or may not be the same person who directs the daily implementation of the program including the supervision of staff and curriculum.

Commissioners—early childhood professionals who review accreditation decisions.

Component—aspects of an early childhood program that are to be evaluated. The Criteria address 10 components of an early childhood program: interactions among teachers and children; curriculum; relationships among teachers and families; staff qualifications and professional development; administration; staffing; physical environment; health and safety; nutrition and food service; and evaluation.

Criteria—standards by which the components of an early childhood program will be judged.

Director—See definition of *Administrator*.

Early childhood—birth through age 8.

Group—the children assigned to a teaching staff member or team of staff members, occupying an individual classroom or well-defined physical space within a larger room.

Infants—children between the ages of birth and 12 months.

Kindergartners—children in first year of formal schooling, usually 5 to 6 years old.

Preschoolers*—children from 3 to 5 years of age. Children in kindergarten are considered preschoolers in these materials.

Program—Part-day and full-day group programs in schools and other facilities serving a minimum of 10 children birth through age 5 and/or school-age children before and/or after school. The terms *center* and *program* are used interchangeably throughout this document.

School-age children*—children attending first grade or beyond who are participating in a before- and/or after-school program.

Teaching staff—paid adults who have direct responsibilities for the care and education of the children.

Toddlers*—children between the ages of 13 months and 35 months.

Validator—early childhood professional who conducts the on-site validation visit to verify the accuracy of the Program Description.

***The age definitions listed here are by chronological age. When applying the Criteria to programs serving children with special needs, it is necessary to use developmental levels rather than chronological age when assessing the appropriateness of programming.**

1

Policies and Procedures for Accreditation

Purpose

The purpose of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, the accreditation department of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, is to improve the quality of care and education provided for young children in group programs in the United States. The Academy achieves its purpose by developing professional development resources, disseminating public information about high-quality programs, and administering a national, voluntary accreditation system for early childhood programs.

Goals

NAEYC's accreditation system is designed to meet two major goals:

1. to engage early childhood program personnel in a process that will facilitate real and lasting improvements in the quality of the program serving young children, and

2. to evaluate the quality of the program for the purpose of accrediting those programs that substantially comply with the Criteria for high-quality programs.

The following policies and procedures are designed to achieve both of these goals.

Eligibility

To be eligible for accreditation, an early childhood program must

1. serve a minimum of 10 children within the age group of birth through 5 in part- or full-day group programs and/or school-age children served before and/or after school with at least two adults present at all times. School-age programs are eligible if a majority of the children are 8 years old or younger.

If the program serves only school-age children, it may be more appropriate to seek accreditation from the National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA). NAEYC does not accredit family child care homes. Family child care providers may become accredited by the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC).

2. have been in operation at least one year prior to receipt of accreditation. (Programs may apply and participate in self-study activities during their first year of operation but a validation visit cannot be scheduled until the program has completed one full year of operation.)

3. be licensed by the appropriate state/local agencies or if exempt from licensing, demonstrate compliance with its own state's standards for licensing, health and sanitation, and building safety of early childhood programs subject to licensing. In states which have no standards for certain kinds of programs, those programs are eligible to apply for accreditation.

4. include all of the program that comes under the eligibility criteria in the self-

study and validation process. For example, if a program serves infants, toddlers, and school-agers, all these groups must be put forward for accreditation. Similarly, a program that serves children full-day cannot submit only its morning or afternoon program.

Conditions under which a program may submit only a portion of the eligible services include the following:

- The services are separately administered and incorporated and have separate budgets and identifiable names.
- The program is a prekindergarten in a public school, the prekindergarten or kindergarten program may seek accreditation separately. If both seek accreditation, the school is considered one program. All eligible classrooms must participate.
- The program operates fewer than 12 months and a different program is offered on that site serving different children and using different staff the remaining months of the year.
- The program offers a type of service for the eligible age group for which NAEYC has *no* criteria. For example, if the program offers overnight care or parent education (where the parents stay with the children and are being trained in parenting skills) or gymnastics classes for young children. The Criteria do not address home-based, residential care. Therefore, if a 24-hour program seeks accreditation, only the day and evening portions of the program may become accredited.

Multisite organizations

A program that has one administrator and that occupies more than one adjacent building *may* be considered one program. To be eligible to apply for accreditation as a multisite agency, no more than three sites can be included in one application, the additional sites must serve fewer than 60 children, and the sites must be adjacent to one another. *All* sites must be visited during the validation visit. In practice, the term, *adjacent* is interpreted to mean walking distance or short driving distance. For example, sometimes college centers are in more than one building on a fairly large college campus or Head Start programs have classrooms in buildings that are short distances apart, but are administratively one program. The concept of *adjacent* really means that the validation visit can be conducted as usual. If a program has a central administration, budget, and identity but its buildings are too far apart to be validated as usual, then the program must apply separately for accreditation.

If a program completes one Program Description that includes more than one site, it is possible that one site might keep the entire program from achieving accreditation if that site is not in substantial compliance with the Criteria.

Agency and corporate child care systems

In situations such as large chains of centers, even those that may have corporate-wide philosophies and curricula, each center must go through the self-study and validation and be accredited separately. For a multisite agency to become accredited, all sites must participate in the self-study and receive a validation visit. There are several ways to accomplish this, however. Each site can go through the system at its own pace and be validated and accredited at different points in time OR the sites can do their self-studies together and request their validation visits at the same time. If they choose the first option, the agency is treated no differently than individual centers seeking accreditation. If they choose the second option, the validation visits may be coordinated by having the same validators do more than one site. In this case, the administrative documents that are often at a central location may be checked for all programs by one or two validators in one day.

Multisite child care agencies that are affiliated with multiservice agencies may prefer to seek accreditation from the Council on Accreditation of Services for Children and Families, an accrediting body for social service agencies that includes child care standards (120 Wall Street, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10005, 212-797-3000).

Programs outside the United States

Programs located outside the United States can purchase the NAEYC self-study materials for self-evaluation, but NAEYC does not validate/accredit these programs. Of the programs located outside the United States, **only those that are affiliated with the United States government** (for example, Department of Defense schools and military child development programs) **are eligible for accreditation.** In order for the validation visit to occur overseas the program must pay the actual cost of the validation visit plus an additional $100 to cover the cost of the Commission review.

Overview of the accreditation process

The accreditation process involves three steps:

1. The first step is the **self-study.** Program personnel and families conduct the self-study to determine how well the program meets the Academy's Criteria, make needed improvements, and report the compliance with the Criteria on the Program Description form provided by the Academy.

Early childhood programs voluntarily choose to participate in the accreditation process. Programs receive the materials needed to initiate the *self-study* following the payment of an application fee. Administrators, teaching staff, and families use these materials to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the early childhood program.

2. The second step is **validation.** Trained validators make an on-site visit to verify the accuracy of the Program Description.

The program administrator develops and implements a plan for making needed

improvements and, once satisfied that the program is adequately meeting the Criteria, submits the results of the self-study to the Academy by completing a rating scale called the *Program Description.* When the personnel decide that the program is ready and the Academy staff determine that the Program Description is complete, an on-site visit is arranged. The purpose of the on-site visit is to validate that the information contained in the Program Description is an accurate reflection of the daily operations of the program.

3. The third step is the **accreditation decision.** A Commission considers the validated Program Description and makes the accreditation decision. The Commission consists of Academy staff commissioners and external commissioners (appointed by the NAEYC Governing Board to the Accreditation Commission Decision Panel) who audit the staff reviews to ensure reliability and validity.

Accreditation decisions are made by early childhood professionals acting as commissioners who meet in Washington, D.C., monthly. The accreditation decision is a professional judgment within the limits of NAEYC's Criteria for High-Quality Early Childhood Programs (pages 17–66), that considers all components of the program as well as its unique characteristics. A step-by-step overview of the accreditation process as experienced by an early childhood program is presented in Figure 1 on page 5.

Program conducts the self-study

The administrator (or other appropriate person) initiates the process by voluntarily applying to the Academy and paying an application fee that varies depending on the number of children enrolled in the program (see page 100 for the fee structure). For this fee, the program receives all the materials necessary to conduct an in-depth self-study. The director may use the order form on page 101 to begin the self-study.

The self-study is the central element for the accreditation process. Its purpose is to provide an opportunity for the entire staff and the families they serve to examine the program's operations and identify strengths and weaknesses. Undertaking a self-study implies a voluntary commitment to self-evaluation and self-improvement.

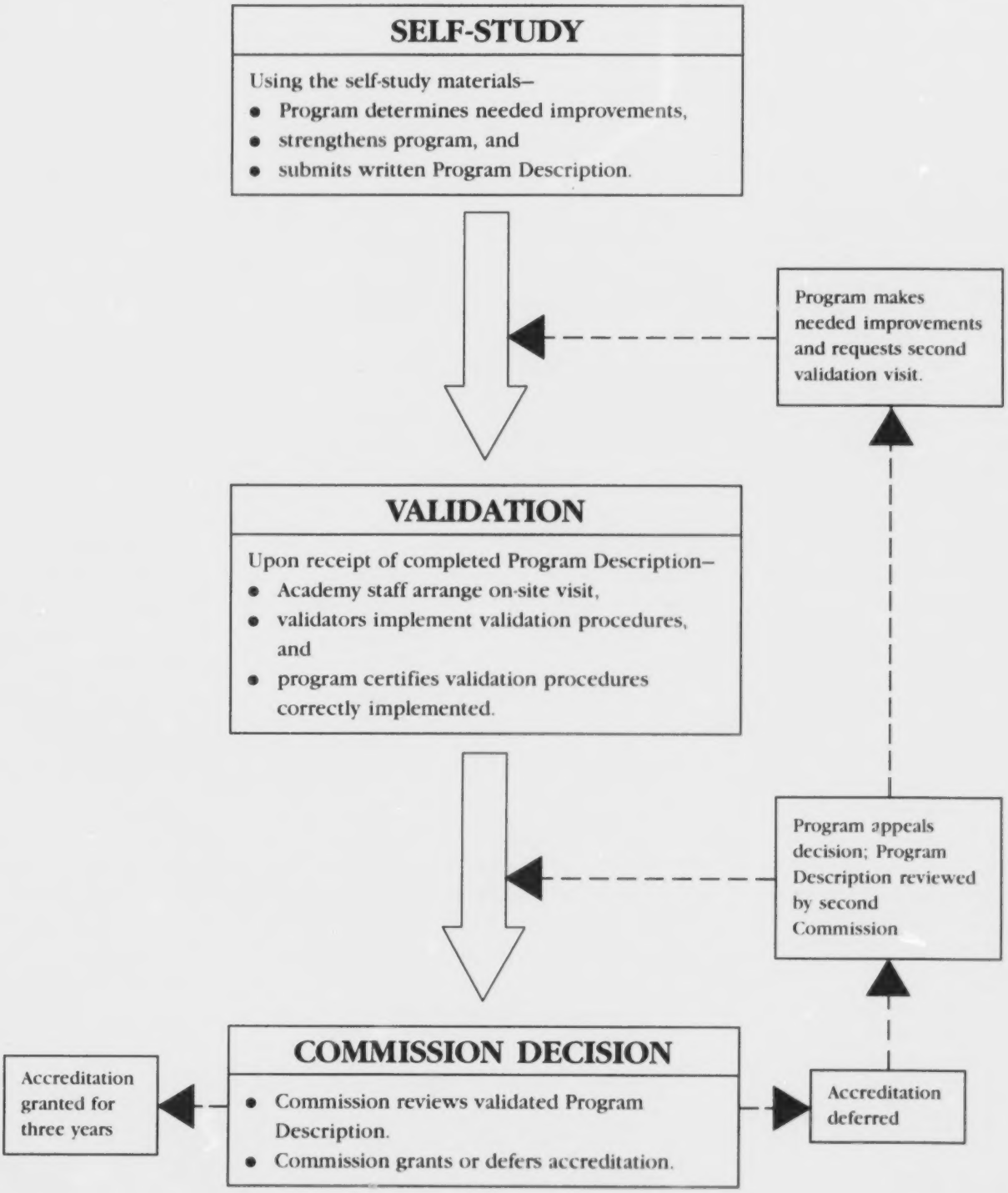
Each program seeking accreditation receives the *Guide to Accreditation.* The *Guide* includes specific instructions for conducting the self-study and preparing for a validation visit, as well as copies of all forms and questionnaires used during the self-study and validation. The specific instructions for achieving accreditation are reprinted in the more handy manual, *Steps to NAEYC Accreditation.*

The self-study consists primarily of four parts:

- the *Early Childhood Classroom Observation* scale that is used by teaching staff and the administrator to rate the quality of interactions among teachers and children, the implementation of the curriculum, the physical environment, and the mechanisms for protecting children's health and safety;
- the *Administrator Report,* a workbook that is used by the director to evaluate the administrative aspects of the program;

Figure 1.

Overview of accreditation process


SELF-STUDY
Using the self-study materials–
• Program determines needed improvements,
• strengthens program, and
• submits written Program Description.
Program makes needed improvements and requests second validation visit.
VALIDATION
Upon receipt of completed Program Description–
• Academy staff arrange on-site visit,
• validators implement validation procedures, and
• program certifies validation procedures correctly implemented.
Program appeals decision; Program Description reviewed by second Commission
COMMISSION DECISION
• Commission reviews validated Program Description.
• Commission grants or defers accreditation.
Accreditation granted for three years
Accreditation deferred

- the *Teaching-Staff Questionnaire* that is completed by all staff members who work with children and addresses staff issues, administration, and program implementation; and
- the *Family Questionnaire* that gives families an opportunity to evaluate the program, particularly the quality of interactions among teaching staff and families.

The time needed for the self-study process varies depending on the strengths and weaknesses of the program. The pace of the self-study process is set by the program director. Most programs take approximately 9 to 18 months to complete the process. The accreditation Criteria are periodically revised; therefore, new accreditation materials may need to be purchased when materials become out-of-date.

Following the self-study, the personnel may determine that the program is ready to proceed with accreditation or that certain areas need improvement. Program personnel may consult by telephone with Academy staff if they need assistance in completing their self-study or identifying resources to use in improving the quality of the program.

When improvements are complete, personnel decide whether to go on and seek accreditation. Programs involved in self-study are *not* committed to seek accreditation. The administrator may decide that the self-study is sufficient to meet personal goals for program evaluation and improvement or that the program's compliance with the Criteria is inadequate to seek accreditation.

Program reports to the Academy

If the program chooses to seek accreditation, the results of the self-study are reported to the Academy by completing the Program Description. The written Program Description is designed to achieve uniformity in format, organization, and length. This facilitates more efficient handling by both on-site validators and by commissioners making evaluation decisions. In cases where the program does not comply with a criterion, the director has the opportunity to provide reasons for noncompliance or to explain how the program meets the criterion through alternate means.

The staff of the Academy examine the Program Description to determine that it is complete. Staff may conduct telephone interviews to obtain additional information for incomplete or unclear areas of the report. Academy staff may advise the program to record additional information in the report or to delay seeking accreditation until improvements have been made.

Program receives validation visit

When the chief administrative officer feels that the program is ready, an on-site validation visit is requested. The program pays an additional fee to cover the cost of the on-site visit and Commission evaluation. The official administrative officer signs a release document stating that the applicant understands the accreditation procedures, knowingly presents the program for review, and will hold the

Academy harmless for its procedures and decisions. **The release document states that accreditation is null and void if false information is submitted to the Academy at any time.**

The number of validators assigned depends on the size of the program and the number of groups to be observed. One validator is usually assigned to programs serving 60 or fewer children. Two validators are assigned to programs serving 61 or more children. The length of the visit also depends on the size of the program. Most visits are either one- or two-day visits; however, larger programs require additional days. Some validation visits may vary due to the unique aspects of an early childhood program.

Validators are highly qualified early childhood professionals. Validator qualifications include experience in working directly with children in a group programs and in administering an accredited program; a college degree in early childhood education, child development, or the equivalent; and appropriate personal characteristics such as objectivity, good communication skills, and professionalism. Validators are thoroughly trained in the validation procedures and tasks.

Assignment of validators to programs is guided by the need to control for possible conflicts of interest. Academy guidelines for defining conflicts of interest must be followed. If the director believes that any of the potential validators would be unable to be objective due to some conflict of interest, the director reports the conflict of interest to the Academy **prior** to confirmation of the visit. Validators are also required to indicate possible conflicts of interest when they have been

A high-quality early childhood program is a caring community of learners.

assigned to programs. (If an administrator cancels a validation visit following its confirmation, a $50 cancellation fee is charged.)

The purpose of the on-site validation is to verify that the information contained in the written Program Description is an accurate reflection of the day-to-day operations of the program. **Validators do not make decisions regarding accreditation,** but advise the Academy on the accuracy of the Program Description. Validators may find that the Program Description does not accurately reflect some positive or negative aspects of the program. In either case, the validators report and discuss their findings with the administrator during the validation visit. The results of the discussion are reported on the Program Description and submitted to the Academy for Commission review.

Activities conducted on-site include an initial meeting with the director, tour of the facility, sample observations of several classrooms, interviews with teaching staff whose classrooms are observed (if needed to complete ratings), a sampling of records and written policies, and an in-depth discussion of the entire validation with the director. **Validators conduct an in-depth exit interview with the director that provides the administrator the opportunity to submit additional information and to comment or explain each non-validated criterion.**

At the conclusion of the validation visit, the director signs a release form indicating that the validated Program Description accurately represents the results of the discussion with the validator(s) and that the validator(s) followed the Academy's prescribed procedures in conducting the visit. The director has an opportunity to formally evaluate the validators' performance. If the director has evidence that a validator did not follow the prescribed procedures, the director should notify the Academy immediately; Academy staff will investigate the evidence and rectify the situation. **Administrators should not wait until Commission decisions have been made to notify the Academy of improper procedures.**

Commissioners consider the Program Description

Accreditation decisions are reviewed by members of the Accreditation Commission Decision Panel who apply and are appointed by the NAEYC Governing Board. The Commission decision process involves an internal staff review followed by an external audit by Panel members. The Accreditation Commission Decision Panel is comprised of a diverse group of early childhood professionals from throughout the country including accredited-program administrators, teacher educators, and researchers. Cases are assigned to Commissions using procedures to avoid conflicts of interest.

For each case, the Commission has the choice of two decisions: grant accreditation or defer accreditation until improvements can be made or additional information is obtained. In some cases, the Commission cannot make an accreditation decision due to inadequate or incomplete information and a revisit may be necessary. Decisions are based on professional judgments made within the

limits of the Academy's Criteria. Commissioners consider the context in which a program is operating and the overall impact of varying degrees of compliance for each component. To achieve accreditation, 100% compliance with the Criteria is *not* required. For example, if all staff members do not meet the criteria for staff qualifications, commissioners will consider staff members' relevant professional preparation along with the observed quality of interactions among teachers and children and the curriculum. (For more information on how decisions are made, see pages 14 to 16.)

A decision to defer accreditation is accompanied by specific reasons and recommendations for improvements. If a program is deferred, the program may make necessary improvements and request an additional on-site validation. The costs of the validation are incurred by the program. After a program is deferred twice, the program needs to repeat the complete self-study process.

Deferred programs may appeal

Deferred programs receive a copy of the Academy's appeals procedures and instructions for preparing an appeal. Three options exist for deferred programs to pursue accreditation.

1. Accreditation may be pursued by addressing recommendations from the Commission Decision Report and implementing improvements to the program. The program may take up to nine months (from the date when the validated Program Description and Commission Decision Report are received) to make necessary improvements and submit a new Program Description for a verification visit. An on-site visit is then necessary to verify program improvements. The program is charged a fee for the verification visit.

2. The decision may be automatically appealed to another Commission for a second decision. The second Commission is not informed that the case is an appeal. If the decision to defer is upheld by a second Commission, the program may pursue accreditation as described above under #1.

3. A program may appeal the deferred decision on the grounds that validation procedures were not properly followed and therefore, the evidence used to make the decision was inadequate. A program must immediately submit documentation and/or evidence that validation procedures were not properly followed.

A deferred program must notify the Academy of its intent to appeal within 30 days after receipt of the Commission Decision Report.

Accredited programs must maintain accreditation

Accredited programs receive a copy of the Commission Decision Report and their original validated Program Description, promotional materials, and a certificate indicating the expiration date of accreditation. The accreditation is valid for three years. Accredited programs are required to submit an **Annual Report** that addresses the criteria cited for improvement as well as those criteria that require annual action (such as many evaluation standards). Annual Reports also inform the

Academy of any changes in staff or administrative personnel or other aspects of the program such as the physical facility. The Annual Report is due to the Academy on or before the first anniversary of accreditation. Failure to submit an annual report may be grounds for withdrawal of accreditation. **A copy of the Annual Report is sent to each accredited program with the Commission Decision Report. Both reports should be kept on file to assist in preparation of the Annual Report when it is due.** A blank copy of the Annual Report form can be found in the *Guide to Accreditation*.

Programs that relocate or experience a change in ownership/merger following accreditation must immediately notify the Academy of the changes and submit to a verification visit within 6 months of the change. The program is charged a fee for the verification visit.

Near the second anniversary of accreditation, programs should apply and request self-study materials for reaccreditation. At least 90 days prior to expiration of accreditation, an accredited program must submit the completed Program Description requesting a validation visit, to remain accredited and to ensure that high-quality is maintained. Programs may request in writing to delay their reaccreditation visit for a period of time not to exceed 9 months ONLY if one of the following conditions exists:

1. The program will relocate during the time the visit is to be conducted.
2. An accident or natural disaster occurs to prevent or prohibit a reaccreditation visit.
3. A merger is in process.

Change in director since accreditation was granted is not legitimate grounds for requesting an extension of accreditation, because the director is such a critical determinant of program quality. If the director leaves after the self-study is completed but before a validation visit is conducted, a brief postponement of the visit may be permitted.

Programs that have maintained accreditation for 6 years are eligible to apply for a **merit extension.** Merit extensions, a fourth year extension of accreditation status, may be granted if the following conditions are met: a program has achieved accreditation twice (earned 6 years of accreditation); the same director is present; staff turnover is low; compliance with criteria is high; and no serious complaints were verified. If these conditions are met, the program should submit a written request for a 7th year of accreditation, documenting compliance with these conditions during the 6th year of accreditation.

Complaint procedures for accredited programs

The Academy retains the right to initiate a review of the accreditation of a program at any time on the basis of evidence of noncompliance with the Criteria. On the basis of information in the Annual Report or as a result of a written complaint, the Academy may require that the program respond in writing and/or submit to a site visit, announced or unannounced. In such an event, the program will be offered an opportunity to be reevaluated. During this time, accreditation status is "under

review" and the program does not appear on the list of accredited programs. If the program refuses to comply with these procedures by failing to respond or submit to a site visit, accreditation is withdrawn.

The Academy may deny accreditation to any program if it determines that the program does not comply with the Academy's Criteria. If accreditation is granted, it may be revoked upon a determination that the program is no longer in compliance with the Criteria or if the program has failed to comply with Academy procedures. If accreditation is granted, it is null and void if false information is knowingly submitted to the Academy at any time.

Individuals (parents, early childhood professionals) who have evidence that an accredited program is not in compliance with the accreditation criteria should contact the Academy to request a copy of the complaint procedures.

Advertisement of NAEYC accreditation

The use of NAEYC accreditation signs, seals, certificates, posters, logos, or other indications of accreditation is a privilege reserved for accredited early childhood programs. These symbols are only on loan for proper display during the term of accreditation. An early childhood program may not use these symbols if the program has not been accredited or if the program has been accredited but the term of accreditation is expired. No statement should be made about possible future accreditation. Statements such as "has applied for accreditation," or "is seeking accreditation" are not permissible.

Accredited programs receive information brochures for distribution to parents. These brochures define accreditation for the consumer using the following definition: "Early childhood programs accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children have voluntarily undergone a comprehensive process of internal self-study, have invited external professional review to verify compliance with the Criteria for High-Quality Early Childhood Programs, and have been found to be in substantial compliance with the Criteria. A copy of the Criteria may be obtained from NAEYC's Academy. NAEYC is not connected with and is not responsible for the administration, acts, personnel, property, or practices of accredited programs."

2

Criteria for High-Quality Early Childhood Programs with Interpretations

History and development of the Criteria

The National Association for the Education of Young Children defines a high-quality early childhood program as one that meets the needs of and promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of the children and adults—parents, staff, and administrators—who are involved in the program. Each day of a child's life is viewed as leading toward the growth and development of a healthy, intelligent, and contributing member of society.

NAEYC's Criteria for High-Quality Early Childhood Programs were developed and are periodically revised using a consensus-building process involving numerous members of the early childhood profession. The accreditation Criteria were originally developed over a three-year period (from 1981 to 1984) by reviewing approximately 50 evaluation documents and the research literature on the effects on children of various components of an early childhood program. The validity of the original Criteria as indicators of a good quality program was tested by submitting them to approximately 250 early childhood specialists throughout the country. The Criteria were then revised based on the recommendations of the 175 specialists who responded. A draft of the Criteria was published in NAEYC's journal *Young Children,* in November 1983 and distributed for review and comment to the Association's membership. Numerous individuals and NAEYC Affiliate Groups reviewed and critiqued the draft. Open hearings were also held at NAEYC Conferences in 1982 and 1983 to receive comment about the accreditation system. The Criteria were then field-tested in 32 early childhood programs in four areas of the country. The Criteria were adopted by NAEYC's Governing Board in July 1984.

Following a thorough review based on the first five years of experience applying the Criteria in accreditation decisions, the Criteria were revised in 1991; after more than a decade of accreditation experience, the Criteria were revised again in 1998. The most recent revision process began in 1996 and again included reviewing the research, holding hearings at NAEYC conferences, and soliciting input and written comment from thousands of early childhood program personnel, validators, commissioners, and Academy staff. (The 1991 edition of the accreditation materials remain valid for programs to request validation until September 1999.)

A great deal of knowledge, gleaned from years of research and observation, now exists about child development and learning, and how to provide optimal

environments for young children. The Academy's Criteria are based on that knowledge and the practical experience of thousands of early childhood professionals who work with young children and their families.

The development of the Criteria would not have been possible without the efforts of numerous early childhood and child development experts. Although it is not possible to acknowledge the hundreds of people who contributed to this project, the Bibliography (pages 87–92) lists the written sources from which the Criteria were developed.

These Criteria include 10 components of group programs for young children. Each component begins with a brief goal statement and rationale followed by the criteria which indicate that the goal is being achieved. Each criterion is followed by interpretive statements to help clarify and explain the item. Appendixes A, B, C, D, E, and F contain further details.

Only the Academy staff are authorized to officially represent NAEYC in interpreting the accreditation procedures and Criteria as established by the NAEYC Governing Board.

How criteria are interrelated and how decisions are made

The Commission bases its decision on professional judgment and considers the overall context of the program, its uniqueness, the overall level of compliance as well as the interrelationships among criteria components. Although there is no explicit numerical weighting system assigned to the Criteria, Commissioners are trained to review programs taking into consideration the fact that some criteria are more important than others. For example, providing developmentally appropriate learning experiences is certainly more critical than providing a change of clothing. During the many years of operating the accreditation system, we have found that there is enormous consistency among different Commissions in their application of professional judgment; we regularly obtain 95% or higher agreement among Commissioners reviewing the same program.

Commissioners are instructed to give greatest weight to the following components of the Criteria: interactions among teachers and children, curriculum, staff-child ratios and group sizes, and health and safety. Because the system involves actually observing what happens to children in the program, we give greatest weight to the results of the observations. The administrative criteria such as qualifications of the staff, personnel policies, and operating procedures support the delivery of quality care and education in the classroom. Compliance with these administrative criteria increases the likelihood that positive interactions and appropriate curriculum will occur in classrooms; however, compliance with the administrative criteria does not guarantee that such high-quality experiences will be observed.

Accreditation decisions are based on substantial compliance and rely on professional judgment rather than a point system. Having had several years of experience making accreditation decisions, the Academy now has a clearer picture of how the early childhood profession defines high quality. What has become clear is that there are important relationships between criteria that can

never be clearly communicated through a simple listing of the standards. In early childhood programs, good things tend to happen together. In addition, the way in which programs meet standards may sometimes result in the opposite effect than the intent of the Criteria. Some examples will clarify the complex issues involved.

The most obvious example of how Criteria are related concerns staff-child ratios. Ratios and group sizes are important predictors of quality. If a program is in compliance with NAEYC's standards for staffing, it is more likely that the adult-child interactions will be positive and the curriculum will be developmentally appropriate. However, compliance with staffing standards does not guarantee this type of quality for children. Other criteria also have an effect. For example, the amount and kind of training the teaching staff have had, the administrator's qualifications, the availability of appropriate materials, and the organization of the environment also play a vital role in influencing the nature of the child's experiences.

An attempt to meet the "letter" of the standard may sometimes result in not meeting the "spirit" of the standard. For example, in order to maintain staff-child ratios, some programs regroup children numerous times throughout the day. These transitions can be very difficult, especially for younger children and leads to lack of compliance with another criterion, continuity of care. In short, one criterion cannot be addressed in isolation from others.

From our accreditation experience, we have found that having a well-qualified early childhood specialist to direct the educational program and well-trained teachers are the most powerful predictors of classroom practice. As a result, programs have been accredited in which criteria for ratios and group sizes are not fully met in every classroom with Commission recommendations to move toward compliance with NAEYC's group size and ratio recommendations, while some programs that are in compliance with these standards have been deferred. Because we do not exclude programs that do not meet our staffing standards, we have had a unique research opportunity to collect data about how those standards influence children's experience. We have found that the more out-of-compliance a program is with the staffing criteria, the less likely it is that we will observe positive interactions among teachers and children and developmentally appropriate curriculum practice. Compliance with the staffing criteria not only affects, but actually predicts, compliance with other criteria.

The decision to accredit a program is based on both quantitative information as well as qualitative analysis. For instance, the more criteria that are not met, the less likely is a positive accreditation decision. But noncompliance with a few key criteria may result in a negative decision because the children are judged to be at-risk of harm. For example, a program that used physical punishment **(A-6)** or did not adequately supervise children **(H-7)** could not be accredited until those situations were corrected.

A high-quality program for young children and families is more than the sum of its parts. The Criteria listed in this book provide the framework from which individual programs will build. As a result, accredited programs will not all look

alike. Some are in church basements, others are in public school buildings, while others have specially designed model facilities. What they share in common is that they have demonstrated substantial compliance with the profession's Criteria for High-Quality Early Childhood Programs and they have demonstrated a commitment to self-evaluation and improvement.

Criteria for High-Quality Early Childhood Programs *with Interpretations*

A. Interactions among Teachers and Children

GOAL: Interactions between children and adults provide opportunities for children to develop an understanding of self and others and are characterized by warmth, personal respect, individuality, positive support, and responsiveness. Teachers facilitate interactions among children to provide opportunities for development of self-esteem, social competence, and intellectual growth.

RATIONALE: Developmentally appropriate practices occur within a context that supports the development of relationships between teachers and children, among children, among teachers, and between teachers and families. In a caring, inclusive community all children can develop and learn to their fullest potentials. The early childhood classroom or group functions as a community of learners in which all participants consider and contribute to each other's well-being and learning. Children learn to respect and acknowledge differences in abilities and talents, and value each person for their strengths.

A-1. Teachers interact frequently with children. Teachers express respect for and affection toward children by smiling, touching, holding, and speaking to children at their eye level throughout the day, during routines such as arrival and departure and mealtimes as well as during teacher-planned and child-initiated experiences. Teachers actively seek meaningful conversations with children.

Consistent, positive relationships with a limited number of adults and other children are a fundamental determinant of healthy human development and provide the context for children to learn about themselves and their world, and also to learn how to develop positive, constructive relationships with other people. Interaction with adults contribute to all areas of development and learning. Both verbal and nonverbal communication between adults and individual children should be frequent.

A-2. Teachers are available and responsive to children; encourage them to share experiences, ideas, and feelings; and listen to them with attention and respect. Teachers are aware of the activities of the entire group even when dealing with smaller groups; adults position themselves strategically and look up often from involvement.

Responsiveness will vary depending on the age of the child. For example, the responsive adult quickly comforts an infant in distress, nods at a toddler in need of reassurance, replies to an older child's question, engages in conversation, or complies with a verbal request. For a child to wait for adult time or response is sometimes inevitable but such waiting should be minimized as much as possible, particularly for infants who need to experience a responsive environment to develop a sense of trust and security. When teachers talk with infants and toddlers, they provide verbal labels or supply the appropriate word.

A-3. Teachers speak with children in a friendly, positive, courteous manner. Teachers converse frequently with children, asking open-ended questions and speaking individually to children (as opposed to the whole group) most of the time. Teachers engage individual children in conversations; describe actions, experiences, and events; listen and respond to children's comments and suggestions. Teachers talk positively to children about siblings and other family members. Teachers and children discuss family events, traditions, and routines.

Children's communication skills develop from verbal interaction with adults. Open-ended questions prompt the child to talk because they cannot be answered by *yes* or *no* or one word. Other questioning techniques that contribute to language development should also be used. Equally important, to promote language development, children need something interesting to talk about. Family and community experiences can provide the basis for beginning conversations that expand with the experiences that children share in the educational program. Research demonstrates that children's verbal language development is greatly influenced by both the quantity and quality of their conversations with adults from the earliest years of life (Hart & Risley 1995).

A-4. Teachers treat children of all races, religions, family backgrounds, and cultures with equal respect and consideration. Teachers provide children of both sexes with equal opportunities to take part in all activities. Teachers make it a firm rule that a person's identity (age, race, ethnicity, language, or disability) is never an acceptable reason for teasing or rejecting. Teachers initiate activities and discussions to build positive self-identity in each child and also teach the value of differences. Teachers talk positively about each child's physical characteristics and cultural heritage.

All children develop within and are influenced by social and cultural contexts. Because cultural diversity is the norm in America, children must learn to function in diverse cultural contexts. Recognition of and respect for a child's unique cultural heritage is an essential first step in building positive identity. Culture provides a source of identity, a framework for interpreting the world, the basis for a feeling of belonging, and the basis for aesthetic values. During early childhood, children need to acquire a strong, positive sense of their own identity while also developing respect and consideration for other people whose perspectives and experiences may be different from their own. Strategies for supporting children's positive self-identity will vary with the context. (For resources on this topic: see NAEYC Position Statement: Responding to Linguistic and Cultural Diversity 1996; McCracken 1993; Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force 1989; Teaching Tolerance 1997).

A-5. Teachers encourage children's development of independent functioning, as appropriate. Teachers foster the development of age-appropriate self-help skills such as picking up toys, wiping spills, personal grooming (toileting, handwashing), obtaining and caring for materials, and other skills.

Independent functioning is an important developmental task for young children. Self-regulation develops gradually as adults model expected behavior, patiently support children's efforts, and offer opportunities for successful practice. Expectations of independent functioning in children will vary with the developmental level of the child and the cultural perspective of the family. See Appendix A for more information on developmentally appropriate practices.

A-6a. Teachers facilitate the development of responsibility, self-regulation, and self-control in children. For example: Teachers set clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom behavior and in the case of older children, help them to set their own limits. Teachers use children's mistakes as learning opportunities, describing the situation and encouraging children's evaluation of the problem rather than imposing the solution. Teachers anticipate and eliminate potential problems, redirecting children to more acceptable behavior or activity. Teachers listen and acknowledge children's feelings and frustrations and respond with respect. Teachers guide children to resolve conflicts, and model skills that help children to solve their own problems. Teachers encourage appropriate behavior, patiently reminding children of rules and their rationale as needed.

Teachers use positive techniques of guidance, including logical or natural consequences applied in problem situations, redirection, anticipation of and elimination of potential problems, and encouragement of appropriate behavior rather than competition, comparison, or criticism. Consistent, clear rules are developed in conjunction with children and are discussed with them to make sure they understand. Teachers do not force very young children to explain their own behavior but help children recognize another child's feelings.

A-6b. Teachers abstain from corporal punishment or humiliating or frightening discipline techniques. Food or beverage is never withheld as a form of discipline.

Guidance techniques should be nonpunitive and accompanied by rational explanations of expectations. Limits are set for children but the environment is arranged so that a minimal number of *no's* are necessary, particularly for very young children.

A-7. The sound of the environment is primarily marked by pleasant conversation, spontaneous laughter, and exclamations of excitement rather than harsh, stressful noise or enforced quiet.

The sound of the environment is an indicator of the quality of the adult-child interaction and the degree to which children are constructively engaged in learning experiences. Because young children are developing language, conversation is encouraged and expected. Adult voices should not predominate.

A-8. Teachers support children's emotional development, assisting children to be comfortable, relaxed, happy, and involved in play and other activities. Teachers help children deal with anger, sadness, and frustration by comforting, identifying, and reflecting feelings, and helping children use various strategies to express emotions and solve social problems. Children are encouraged to verbalize feelings and ideas. Teachers intervene quickly when children's responses to each other become aggressive, unacceptable, or harmful, discuss the inappropriateness of such responses, and help children develop more positive strategies.

Children's level of involvement in activities will vary depending on the age of

Teachers support children's beginning friendships.

children, time of day, kind of activity, and other factors. At times, children express strong emotions such as anger, frustration, and sadness. Such expression of emotion is desirable. The criterion is to be applied generally with recognition of individual differences and circumstances. Children's verbalization of emotions and ideas is both a goal for and an indicator of a good quality program. While preverbal children will naturally communicate physically, teachers redirect their actions constructively and encourage verbal expression to prevent aggressive responses.

A-9. Teachers recognize and encourage prosocial behaviors among children, such as cooperation, helping, taking turns, and talking to solve problems. Teachers' expectations of children's social behavior are developmentally appropriate. Teachers support children's beginning friendships and provide opportunities for children to learn from each other as well as adults.

The development of prosocial behaviors is a major goal of a good quality early childhood program. Such behavior is fostered through modeling, coaching, and encouragement rather than through punitive measures. Social skills develop through interaction with peers and caring adults, and vary greatly depending on developmental age and experience. While development of socially appropriate behavior is an important curriculum goal (see **B-7**), it is equally important that adults recognize developmental differences and adjust accordingly. See Appendix A for more information on developmentally appropriate practices.

A-10. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies to enhance children's learning and development throughout the day. For example: Teachers pose problems, ask questions, and make comments and suggestions that stimulate children's thinking and extend their learning. Teachers extend the range of children's interests by exposing them to new experiences, ideas, or problems. Teachers coach and/or directly guide children in the acquisition of specific skills as needed, being careful to challenge but not frustrate an individual child.

Young children learn actively by observing and participating with other children and adults, especially their parents and teachers. In a high-quality program, teachers take advantage of "teachable moments" throughout the day, such as engaging children in conversations over meals or complicating a dramatic play situation by adding props (such as putting writing implements in the "restaurant or store" center) or taking on a role (such as playing "tea party" with a toddler or pretending to be a customer in the children's shoe store). At times, teachers model specific skills or help children acquire a skill that is just beyond their current level of functioning (such as cutting with scissors, finding their name on a class chart, matching letters in a lotto game, or counting objects for a purpose).

B. Curriculum

GOAL: The curriculum engages children actively in the learning process, provides a variety of developmentally appropriate learning experiences, and encourages children to pursue their own interests in the context of life in the community and the world.

RATIONALE: The curriculum includes the goals of the program (the content that children are learning) and the planned activities as well as the daily schedule, the availability and use of materials, transitions between activities, and the way in which routine tasks of living are used as learning experiences. Criteria for curriculum implementation reflect the knowledge that young children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experience as well as culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their understanding of the world around them.

B-1. The program has a written statement of its philosophy and goals for children which is available to all staff and families.

Written policies available to staff and families are essential to improve communication, guide performance of staff, and help families make informed decisions about their children.

B-2. The program has written curriculum plans based on knowledge of child development and learning, and assessment of individual needs and

The program is designed to be inclusive of all children, including children with identified disabilities and special learning and developmental needs.

interests. The learning environment and activities for children reflect the program's philosophy and goals.

Curriculum is an organized framework that describes the content that children are to learn as well as the planned experiences, materials, and teaching strategies. The younger the child, the less formal the curriculum plan needs to be; but even in programs for infants and toddlers, teachers are thoughtful about their goals for children's development and learning. Programs should articulate learning goals across all curriculum content areas (see **B-7**).

B-3a. Teachers have clearly defined goals for individual children that guide curriculum planning. Teachers accurately assess the skills and progress of each child in the program (for example, through the use of observations, assessment tools, activity records). Teachers identify children who experience difficulties in behavior or development, and develop a plan to help children acquire acceptable behavior or develop skills as needed. Teachers adapt plans in response to the needs, strengths, or interests of individual children. Teachers are prepared to meet identified special learning or developmental needs of individual children, including children with disabilities.

Each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as individual personality, temperament, learning style, experiences, and family background. Developmentally appropriate programs adapt for inevitable individual variation among children. Children's individual needs should be interpreted broadly; for example, food allergies, family situations, personal fears or preferences. In addition to general, long-range curriculum plans for groups (see **B-2**), teachers plan activities for individual children based on individual assessment of children's development and learning (see **J-3**). Early childhood teachers are also important resources in helping identify and diagnose a child's special learning or developmental need.

B-3b. The program is designed to be inclusive of all children, including children with identified disabilities and special learning and developmental needs. Staff are aware of the identified/diagnosed special needs of individual children and are trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act are developed and implemented in a developmentally appropriate manner. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns for children with special needs based on IEPs or IFSPs. Staff work in collaboration with appropriate professionals (such as early childhood special educators, therapists) and/or make appropriate professional referrals where necessary. Therapy is developed appropriately and incorporated within classroom activities as much as possible, rather than removing the child from the classroom.

Family members are involved in development and use of individual education plans. Staff address the priorities and concerns of families of children with special needs.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), effective 1992, states that people with disabilities, including physical, mental, and/or medical impairments, are entitled to equal rights in public accommodations, including early childhood programs. The ADA presents an exciting opportunity to plan for and include children with disabilities in all early childhood settings. All children and families benefit from inclusion. Children with disabilities can share learning opportunities with their peers, while inclusion also fosters caring attitudes and teaches children about interdependence and tolerance of human differences. In high-quality early childhood programs, inclusion is simply an example of the regular practice of meeting the individual needs of each child and family.

Modifications needed will vary depending on the type and number of children with special needs who are served by the program. The inclusion of children with disabilities or special learning and developmental needs may necessitate lower staff-child ratios, specialized staff training, and special environmental arrangement and equipment. Staff should be familiar with available community resources and refer families.

For more information see NAEYC's brochure #514, "Understanding the ADA: Information for Early Childhood Programs," or books, *"A Place for Me": Including Children with Special Needs in Early Care and Education Settings* (Chandler 1994; NAEYC #237) and *Including Children with Special Needs in Early Childhood Programs* (Wolery & Wilbers 1994; NAEYC #145). A practical journal on inclusion, *Young Exceptional Children*, is published by the Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children.

Please note: When applying any of the Criteria to programs serving children with special needs, it may be necessary to use developmental levels rather than children's chronological age when assessing the appropriateness of materials, activities, and other aspects of the program.

B-4. The daily schedule provides a balance of activities in consideration of the child's total daily experience (what happens before, during, and after the program) with attention to the following dimensions of scheduling:

- **All age groups play outdoors daily, if conditions protect children's health and safety.**
- **The schedule provides for alternating periods of quiet and active play.**
- **A balance of large muscle and small muscle activity is provided.**
- **More than one option for group activity (individual, small group, or large group) is available to children most of the day. Infants and toddlers are not expected to function as a large group.**
- **A balance of child-initiated and teacher-initiated activity is provided. The amount of time spent in teacher-initiated, large-group activity is limited.**

A written daily schedule provides for alternating activities on the above dimensions. Regular outdoor play is essential for children's health and development, but programs need to exercise professional judgment in situations where community conditions of violence or extreme weather threaten children's health or safety. If conditions for outdoor play are not safe, the program should provide regular, alternative activities to meet children's needs for fresh air and exercise.

The balance of large group, small group, and individual activity as well as the balance of child-initiated and staff-initiated activity are particularly important. The younger the child, the more activity should be child initiated and individual or small group. The amount of time spent in staff-initiated, large group activity should be minimized for all children younger than 6. See Appendix A for examples of developmentally appropriate activity for young children.

B-5. Developmentally appropriate materials and equipment are available to infants, toddlers, preschoolers, kindergartners and school-age children. Materials and equipment that project diverse racial, gender, and age attributes are selected and used. Teachers provide books, dolls, toys, dress-up props, photos, pictures, and music that reflect the lives of the children and families served in the classroom as well as images that accurately reflect the diversity of society. Staff communicate with parents to ensure that they are aware of materials that are important to the children at home.

Young children need to develop a positive sense of their own identity which is shaped by many factors including their gender, race (including biracial or multiracial), cultural and family background, language, religion, abilities, life experiences and circumstances. And they also need to develop respect and tolerance for people whose perspectives and experiences are different from their own. Therefore, classroom materials and equipment project diverse images of cultural, ethnic, racial, linguistic, gender, and other human differences, that do not stereotype any group. In some settings, classroom materials are used especially to counter negative stereotypes of groups.

For infants: simple, lightweight, easily washable toys such as containers, balls, pop-beads, nesting cups, action-reaction toys, cuddly toys; toys to mouth such as teethers, rings; pictures of real objects; crawling area; sturdy furniture to pull up self.

For toddlers: push and pull toys; stacking toys; large wooden spools/beads/cubes; sturdy picture books; music; pounding bench; simple puzzles; play telephone; dolls; pretend toys; large paper; crayons; sturdy furniture to hold on to while walking; sand and water toys.

For preschoolers: active play equipment for climbing and balancing; unit blocks and accessories; puzzles; manipulative toys; picture books; records; musical instruments; art materials such as finger and tempera paints, crayons, scissors, and paste; dramatic play materials such as dolls, dress-up clothes, and props; child-sized furniture; puppets; sand and water toys.

For kindergartners: active play equipment for climbing and balancing; unit blocks and accessories; complex manipulative toys; picture books and early readers; materials for writing and complex art and science projects; a variety of dramatic play materials and props; board and card games; music; computers with appropriate software.

For school-agers: active play equipment and materials such as bats and balls for organized games; construction materials for woodworking; unit blocks and accessories for blocks such as figures, signs, cars, and trees; complex manipulative toys (connecting or interlocking toys, jigsaw puzzles); materials for hobby and art projects, science projects; materials for dramatics, cooking; books; audiotapes and recordings; musical instruments; board and card games; computers with appropriate software.

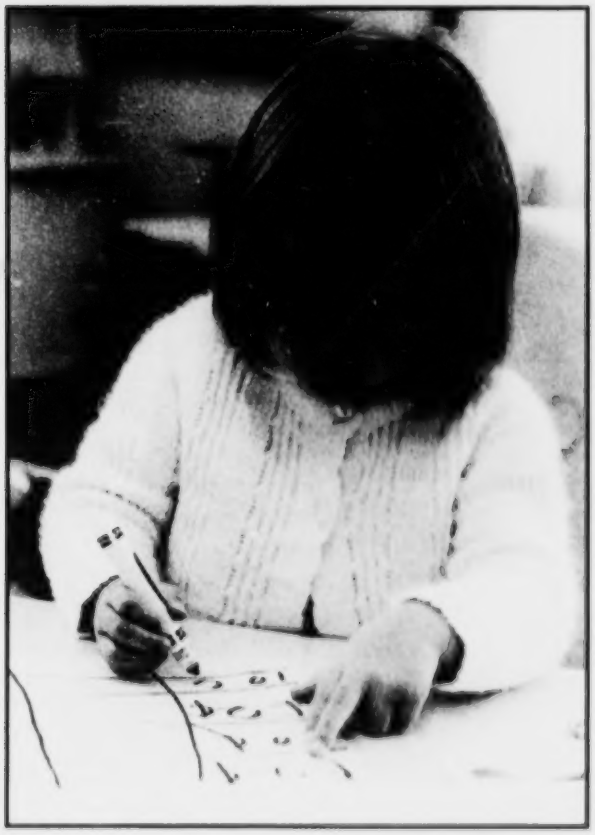
B-6a. Active media that children can control, such as videotaping, cameras, audiotaping, and developmentally appropriate computer software, may be in the classroom as active learning materials, along with other materials that children can choose. If such technology is used, the program provides equal access for all children to such active media experiences. (This criterion applies to children, 3 years of age and older; it is not applicable for infants/toddlers.)

Carefully selected and used appropriately, technology can enhance children's cognitive and social abilities. For example, developmentally appropriate

Carefully selected and used appropriately, technology can enhance children's cognitive and social abilities.

computer software engages children in creative play, mastery learning, problem solving, and conversation. In these uses of technology, children control the pacing and the action. Active media, such as computers, should supplement and not replace highly valued early childhood activities and materials such as art, blocks, sand, water, books, exploration with writing materials, and dramatic play. Because research indicates that developmentally appropriate technology can be beneficial for young children, educators should promote equitable access to technology for all children (for example, **not** restricting access to those children whose families can pay an additional fee.) For more information, see *NAEYC Position Statement: Technology and Young Children—Ages Three Through Eight* (NAEYC 1996c) and *Young Children: Active Learners in a Technological Age* (Wright & Shade 1994; NAEYC #341).

B-6b. The use of passive media, such as television, films, and videotapes, is limited to developmentally appropriate programming that has been previewed by adults prior to use; another option for activity is always available; no child is required to view the program; and teachers discuss what is viewed with children to develop critical viewing skills. These passive media are used as infrequent events, rather than as regular, daily routines.



Teachers provide a variety of developmentally appropriate experiences to encourage language and literacy development.

Television, videotape, and other forms of media have the potential to be effective educational tools for children; media can be used constructively to expand children's knowledge and promote the development of positive social values. Unfortunately, commercial media are too often inappropriate, and overly violent and most young children spend considerable time watching television and videotapes at home. In selecting media of any kind, staff should be especially careful to avoid perpetuating stereotypical images of groups. This criterion is intended to support the positive uses of media while also eliminating the potential misuse of the media.

B-7. Teachers provide a variety of developmentally appropriate activities, experiences, and materials that are selected to engage children in active, meaningful learning and to achieve the following goals:

a. foster positive self-identity and sense of emotional well-being

b. develop social skills and knowledge

c. encourage children to think, reason, question, and experiment (as used in mathematics, science, and social studies)

d. encourage language (speaking, listening) and literacy development (emerging reading, writing awareness and skills)

e. enhance physical development and skills

f. encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety, and nutritional practices

g. encourage creative expression, representation, and appreciation for the arts

h. respect cultural diversity

Long-range and daily curriculum plans should reflect commitment to at least the above goals. One activity or learning experience could easily meet more than one of the above goals *through an integrated curriculum approach.* For example, a study of a science concept such as weather might engage children in thinking, reasoning, questioning, and experimenting while they also use language and emerging literacy skills and creative representation, and learn about health and safety. Some examples of developmentally appropriate learning experiences for each age group relevant to each goal area appear in Appendix A.

B-8. Teachers provide materials and time for children to select their own activities during the day. Children may choose from among several activities that the teacher has planned or the children initiate. Teachers respect the child's right to choose not to participate at times.

In group programs, there may be too many situations in which children must participate without choice, such as eating or going outside when those activities are scheduled. Good programs are flexible to meet the needs of individual children throughout the day. They arrange situations in which participation is an option and in these situations children are encouraged but not forced to participate. This criterion addresses the need for young children to develop initiative and decision-making skills by making real choices.

B-9. Teachers conduct smooth and unregimented transitions between activities. Children are not always required to move from one activity to another as a group. Transitions are planned as a vehicle for learning.

Young children are always learning from both planned and unplanned activities. Transitions between activities are integrated into the program as learning opportunities. Children should be encouraged to help during transition times. Transitions should be carefully planned: children should be given advance notice to prepare for change; transitions should be gradual rather than abrupt; and time wasted in waiting should be minimized.

B-10. Teachers are flexible enough to change planned or routine activities according to the needs or interests of children, and/or to cope with changes in weather or other situations that affect routines without unduly alarming children.

. Programs need carefully planned, developmentally sequenced curricula, but all curriculum plans should be flexible enough to provide for the changes and unforeseen circumstances that inevitably arise in children's programs, and to build on children's emerging interests and ideas.

B-11. Routine tasks are incorporated into the program as a means of furthering children's learning, self-help, and social skills. Routines such as diapering, toileting, eating, dressing, and sleeping are handled in a relaxed, reassuring, and individualized manner based on developmental needs. Teachers plan with families to make toileting, feeding, and the development of other self-regulation skills a positive experience for children. Quiet activities are provided for children who are early risers and for children who do not nap.

Young children are constantly learning, and much learning takes place during daily activities. Young children gain a sense of their own identity and self-worth from the way in which their bodily needs are responded to and satisfied. As much as possible, personal care routines should be determined by the individual child's needs and rhythms. See Appendix A for examples of developmentally appropriate approaches to routines.

C. Relationships among Teachers and Families

GOAL: Teachers and families work closely in partnership to ensure high-quality care and education for children, and parents feel supported and welcomed as observers and contributors to the program.

RATIONALE: Young children are integrally connected to their families. Programs cannot adequately meet the needs of children unless they also recognize the importance of the child's family and establish positive relationships with families based on mutual trust and respect. All communication between programs and families should be two-way, but also based on the concept that parents are and should be the principal influence in their children's lives.

C-1. Information about the program is given to new and prospective families, including written descriptions of the program's philosophy (B-1) and operating procedures (E-2). Families have opportunities to have input regarding policies and procedures, and plans for meeting children's individual needs. Programs with non-English-speaking families provide materials in the parents' native language or arrange for translation.

Parents have the responsibility for selecting the best possible arrangement for their children. It is very important that families are informed of the program's philosophy so that they can make an educated choice for their children. All programs need a written statement of philosophy and goals that is readily available

Teachers work in collaborative partnerships with families, establishing and maintaining regular, ongoing two-way communication with children's parents to build trust and mutual understanding.

to parents and staff members. Written statements of philosophy and policy do not ensure good communication but they provide a basis for good communication and understanding between families and staff. Similarly, early childhood teachers need information from families to ensure that policies and practices are responsive to individual needs of children and their families. Communication between professionals and families is especially important because young children cannot clearly communicate their needs and desires to adults; therefore, programs must ensure that language differences do not become a barrier to communication.

C-2. A process has been developed for orienting children and families to the program that may include a pre-enrollment visit, parent orientation meeting, or gradual introduction of children to the program that also supports children and families through the separation process.

The transition from home can be a difficult one and must be planned. There are numerous methods of orientation for both children and families. The criterion does not require that one particular method be implemented but it does require that an orientation for both children and families be provided.

C-3. Teachers work in collaborative partnerships with families, establishing and maintaining regular, ongoing two-way communication with children's parents to build trust and mutual understanding, and to ensure that children's learning and developmental needs are met. Teachers listen to parents, seek to understand their goals and preferences

Parents are welcome visitors in the program at all times and are encouraged to be involved in the program in various ways.

for their children, and respect cultural and family differences. When staff are not of the linguistic and cultural background of the children and families served, increased efforts are made to ensure communication with families and ongoing staff development opportunities are available, such as regular conferences with a translator present. Teachers make parents feel welcome when they enter the room.

The expertise of early childhood professionals is a rich source of information to assist parents, and the parents' expertise about their own family and children is a rich source of information to assist staff in their strategies for each child's learning. The relationship between staff and families offers excellent opportunities for mutual support and communication.

C-4. Parents are welcome visitors in the program at all times (for example, to observe, eat lunch with a child, or volunteer to help in the classroom). Parents and other family members are encouraged to be involved in the program in various ways, taking into consideration employed parents and those with little spare time.

The program's policy should openly encourage family involvement. Parents should be free to visit the program unannounced at any time. Opportunities for involvement in the program should be designed to support families rather than create additional stress for them or become a burden.

C-5. A verbal and/or written system is established for sharing day-to-day happenings that may affect children. Changes in a child's physical or emotional state are reported regularly. A system is in place to ensure that information is communicated to staff following shift changes so that parents can receive information about their child that occurred over the course of the day.

Since verbal systems are not always workable in programs where several staff members interact with children during the day, written systems are often necessary. Such communication systems allow for reporting important information about children to parents and encourage parents to communicate about their children to teachers.

C-6. Teachers and parents work together to make decisions about how best to support children's development and learning or to handle problems or differences of opinion as they arise. Teachers solicit and incorporate parents' knowledge about their children into ongoing assessment and planning. Conferences are held at least once a year and at other times, as needed, to discuss children's progress, accomplishments, and difficulties at home and at the program.

Developmentally appropriate practices derive from teachers' knowledge of individual children and the context within which they develop and learn. The younger the child, the more necessary it is to acquire this knowledge through

relationships with children's families. Conferences do not take the place of daily communication but allow opportunities for in-depth discussion of children's development, and for parents to ask questions, express concerns, or make suggestions about the program. Conferences should be scheduled at least annually, but may be called as requested by either parents or staff.

C-7. Families are informed about the program and the curriculum, and about policy or regulatory changes and other critical issues that could potentially affect the program and/or the early childhood profession, through newsletters, newspaper articles, bulletin boards, and other appropriate means.

Individual programs may be as creative as possible in communication efforts as long as such efforts are seen by families as effective. Programs communicate with families about critical changes that directly affect program quality such as licensing or legislation.

C-8. Teachers and families communicate to ensure that children experience smooth transitions from one program to another during the day. Teachers and families communicate to ensure that the programs from which children come and to which they go from one year to the next provide continuity over time.

Transitions are change and all change is stressful. For young children who have limited experience and few well-developed coping strategies, change can be very stressful. When children move from one program to another or from one group to another within a program, smooth, less-stressful transitions are more likely when teaching staff, administrators, and families work together.

C-9. Communication between staff (teaching staff and administrators) and families conveys trust and respect. For example: Staff greet parents when they arrive and depart. Staff show acceptance of various family structures and cultural perspectives. Staff speak positively about families during the course of the day. Discussions of priorities and concerns between families and staff about specific children are held in private. Staff show sensitivity to families who are experiencing difficulties. When staff and parents discuss a child in the child's presence, the child is included in the conversation. Teacher or room changes, special programs, and other changes in the way children are served are discussed with families before decisions are made. Staff seek parents' specific ideas for dealing with the child when at the program.

When teachers and families work closely in partnership, the program is more likely to be responsive to the needs of children and families. The basis of any such partnership is mutual trust and respect that is fostered over time through frequent communication. It is important that teachers and families communicate about their views on childrearing and their goals for children's learning and

development to minimize potential conflicts and confusion for children. Professionals do not capitulate to parents' demands, but they should demonstrate respect for parents as the principal influence in the child's life and negotiate differences to benefit children.

C-10. Administrators and teachers are familiar with and make appropriate use of community resources including social services; mental and physical health agencies; and educational programs such as museums, libraries, and neighborhood centers. Program personnel connect families with needed resources and comprehensive services based on the needs and interests observed by staff or expressed by families.

Early childhood programs are integrally related to the larger community. Some programs, such as Head Start, provide comprehensive services beyond education to children and families. But to effectively serve children and families in any program regardless of its sponsorship, staff must be knowledgeable about and use the expertise of other professionals in the community both as a supplement to the program's resources and as referral sources for parents.

C-11. Policies ensure that staff and families have an effective way of negotiating difficulties and differences that arise in their interactions. The program has a variety of known and accepted techniques to handle differences (e.g., parent policy council, committee appeals, special conferences, and individual meetings).

Even in programs that work toward establishing partnerships with families through all the means described here (see all **C** criteria), unanticipated difficulties or differences arise that are not simply resolved through communication. Programs need established policies and procedures to address such situations even if they are rarely needed or used.

D. Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

GOAL: The program is staffed by adults who understand child and family development and who recognize and meet the developmental and learning needs of children and families.

RATIONALE: The quality of the staff is the most important determinant of the quality of an early childhood program. Research has found that teachers' level of formal education and professional preparation in child development and/or early childhood education is related to positive outcomes for children such as increased social interaction with adults, development of prosocial behaviors, and improved language and cognitive development.

D-1. Teaching staff qualifications

Research indicates that in early childhood programs, children benefit most from teachers who have higher levels of formal education and specialized early childhood professional preparation (see Arnett 1989; Barnett 1995; Epstein 1994; Cost, Quality & Child Outcomes Study Team 1995; Howes, Smith, & Galinsky 1995; Whitebook, Howes & Phillips 1990). Such expertise can be obtained through preservice education or through ongoing continuing education and professional development while the individual is employed. Many early childhood programs use staffing patterns that draw on the skills and knowledge of differentially qualified staff (see Figure 2 for an example), while other programs rely on a team teaching approach that employs two equally well-qualified teachers in each classroom. These criteria are not intended to stipulate any one model of staffing but rather to reflect the well-established research finding that professional qualifications of teachers result in improved developmental and learning outcomes for children.

The quality of the staff is the most important determinant of the quality of an early childhood program.

Figure 2.
Sample differentiated staffing structure for educational personnel with suggested educational qualifications

Staff role	Relevant master's	Relevant bachelor's	Relevant associate's	CDA Credential	Some training	No training
DIRECTOR	←	Degree and 3 years of experience				
MASTER TEACHER	←	Degree and 3 years of experience				
TEACHER	←					
ASSISTANT TEACHER		←				
TEACHING ASSISTANT			←			

This figure does not include specialty roles such as educational coordinator, social services director, or other providers of special services. Individuals fulfilling these roles should possess the knowledge and qualifications required to fulfill their responsibilities effectively.

Source: Reprinted by permission, from B. Willer, "Estimating the Full Cost of Quality," *Reaching the Full Cost of Quality in Early Childhood Programs*, ed. B. Willer (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1990), 67.

D-1a. Staff who work directly with children are 18 years of age or older and demonstrate the appropriate personal characteristics for working with children as exemplified in the criteria for Interactions among Teachers and Children (Component A) and Curriculum (Component B).

Demonstration of appropriate personal characteristics for successfully working with children is less easily documented than formal training. It should be evaluated through observation of staff-child interaction and curriculum implementation (see Components **A** and **B**) during a probationary period of employment.

D-1b. Early Childhood Teacher Assistants (staff who implement program activities under direct supervision) are high school graduates or the equivalent, have been trained in early childhood education/child development, and/or participate in ongoing professional development programs.

Some individuals hired for assisting roles will possess preservice professional qualifications while others may obtain professional education while employed.

D-1c. Early Childhood Teachers (staff who are responsible for the care and education of a group of children from birth through age 5) have *at least* a CDA Credential or an associate degree in early childhood/child development or equivalent, preferably teachers have baccalaureate degrees in early childhood/child development. If staff have a degree in a related field, the program should document the amount of coursework specifically related to early childhood education.

A CDA Credential requires at least 120 clock hours of formal preparation distributed across the 6 goals and 13 functional areas of the CDA competencies, at least 450 clock hours of experience working directly with children under supervision, and an independent assessment of the individual's competence for working with children. (For information on the CDA Credential, contact the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition, 2460 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20009, 800-424-4310.) An associate degree in early childhood education/child development usually represents 24 to 30 semester hours of specialized study and field experience.

D-1d. Staff working with school-age children have professional preparation in child development, early childhood education, elementary education, recreation or a related field.

Although formal education opportunities for working in school-age care are not available in every community, staff should have post-secondary professional preparation specific to school-age child care and relevant to their job responsibilities.

D-1e. Volunteers receive orientation and ongoing professional development, and only work with children under supervision of qualified staff members.

Many high-quality programs regularly rely on volunteers from the community. Volunteers can expand and enrich the experiences of children in many ways, such as ensuring more individualized attention and support, offering opportunities for intergenerational relationships, and enhancing cultural and linguistic continuity for young children. (See **F-2** regarding staffing with volunteers.)

D-2. Administrator qualifications

These criteria apply to the individual or individuals who are responsible for the educational quality of the program and the efficient and effective management of program.

D-2a. The administrator has expertise (acquired through formal education and experience) in both early childhood education/child development and administration such as human resource and financial management.

Research indicates that the skills and leadership of the program administrator directly affect the quality of program provided for children and families (Bloom 1996). In most programs, the director or administrator is responsible both for ensuring high-quality programming for children (usually a product of formal preparation in the field) as well as ensuring an effectively functioning program with a positive work environment that enables recruitment and retention of qualified staff (requiring administrative competence).

D-2b. In programs serving infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and/or kindergartners an Early Childhood Specialist (an individual with at least a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education/child development and three years of full-time teaching experience with young children and/or a graduate degree in ECE/CD) is employed to direct the educational program (may be the director or other appropriate person, such as education coordinator, curriculum specialist, or assistant director). In public schools, the individual who provides support to prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers and/or who is responsible for program development is a qualified early childhood specialist.

All programs should have an Early Childhood Specialist on staff to direct the educational portion of the program. This individual may also be the chief administrator or may function as a head teacher in a small program.

D-2c. In programs serving only school-age children, the educational program is directed by a school-age specialist with a baccalaureate degree

in elementary education, recreation, or related field, and at least three years of experience working with school-age children.

Depending on the size of the program, the qualified specialist may be a director or a head teacher.

D-3. Staff orientation

New staff, volunteers, and substitutes are adequately oriented about the goals and philosophy of the program, emergency health and safety procedures, individual needs of children assigned to the staff member's care, guidance and classroom management techniques, child abuse and neglect reporting procedures, planned daily activities of the program, and expectations for ethical conduct (see Appendix F for NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct).

The duration and form of the orientation will vary depending on the size of the program, the population served (such as children with special needs), the amount of experience of new staff members or volunteers, and other variables. The program should demonstrate that staff members are oriented in all of the above areas as a minimum level of compliance.

D-4. Professional development

The program provides regular opportunities for staff to participate in ongoing professional development to improve skills in working with children and families or to prepare them to assume more responsible positions. Ongoing professional development provides continuing education and other opportunities for staff to keep abreast of the latest developments in the field, including new programs and practices and pending policy, legislation, or regulatory changes. The amount and kind of continuing education provided will vary depending on the needs of the program, the preservice qualifications of staff, and the number of staff pursuing higher education while employed. Professional development experiences should be credit-bearing whenever possible.

Because new knowledge is always emerging about how best to provide high-quality early childhood education, and because new opportunities and new roles emerge in the field for individuals with professional preparation, it is a professional responsibility to view learning as lifelong and to continue professional growth every year. Even programs with highly qualified staff members need to provide regular opportunities for ongoing professional development to ensure that staff members obtain current knowledge and new ideas. Provision can take the form of on-site activities such as workshops or classes and a resource library. Off-site activities such as time to visit other programs or attend classes should also be provided. The topic of professional development will vary depending on the needs of the program and should be based on evaluation of staff members' performance (see **J-1**).

E. Administration

GOAL: The program is efficiently and effectively administered with attention to the needs and desires of children, families, and staff.

RATIONALE: The way a program is administered will affect all the interactions within the program. Effective administration creates an environment that facilitates the provision of good quality care and education for children. Effective administration includes good communication among involved persons, positive community relations, fiscal stability, and attention to the needs and working conditions of all staff members.

E-1. Annual evaluation and goal-setting

At least annually, the director and staff conduct an assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program and to specify program goals for the year. The annual program evaluation examines the adequacy of staff compensation and benefits, the rates of and reasons for staff turnover, and the effect of staff turnover on the quality of the program. A plan is developed to increase salaries and benefits to ensure recruitment and retention of qualified staff and continuity of relationships with children.

All high-quality organizations (including accredited programs) continually strive to improve. One of the most effective strategies is to systematically engage in goal-setting and evaluation on a regular basis. (For example, the self-study process required for accreditation is such a program assessment.) One of the most important determinants of quality in early childhood programs is the program's ability to recruit and retain a well-qualified staff. When programs do not provide adequate salaries and benefits for staff members, turnover is increased and the quality and continuity of relationships experienced by children is jeopardized. Programs should regularly evaluate the reasons for and impact of staff turnover on children. If turnover rates are excessive (for example, above 25% in any given year), the program should systematically evaluate the reasons for turnover and develop a plan, including specific targets and dates, for increasing compensation and reducing turnover. (See Whitebook, Sakai, & Howes 1997; Cost, Quality, & Child Outcomes Study Team 1995.) The existence of a collective bargaining agreement (as is used in most public schools and some child care agencies) would be taken as evidence of compliance with the criterion for a compensation study.

E-2. Operating policies

The program has written policies and procedures for operating, including policies related to scheduling (hours and holidays), and payment of fees and refunds. Policies regarding the enrollment and termination of children's enrollment protect children's rights as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act. The program has a child abuse and neglect policy that includes reporting requirements for staff as well as

procedures to be followed should a staff member be accused of abuse or neglect.

Written policies are an essential basis for effective and consistent communication among staff and families. A child's enrollment should never be terminated without first informing the parents of a problem, trying to work with the parents to resolve the problem, and giving adequate notice for other arrangements and a smooth transition.

Personnel policies and practices

E-3. The program has written personnel policies including job descriptions; salary scales with increments based on professional qualifications, length of employment, and performance; benefits; resignation and termination; and grievance procedures. Hiring practices are nondiscriminatory. Every effort is made to hire staff who reflect diverse cultural, racial, and linguistic characteristics as needed to communicate with the children and families served.

Written personnel policies facilitate effective program administration and enhance understanding. NAEYC's anti-discrimination policy states: "NAEYC's first commitment is to the rights and interests of children. In that regard, NAEYC believes that individuals in the early childhood field should be hired, employed, and if necessary, terminated based solely on their competence and qualifications to perform their designated duties, and not on the basis of their gender, race, national origin, religious beliefs, age, marital status, disability, or sexual orientation." In programs affiliated with churches, synagogues, or other places of worship, religious affiliation may be considered a qualification for employment. Similarly, in programs serving children from diverse linguistic and cultural groups, a staff members' language and cultural background may be considered a qualification for employment.

E-4. Benefits packages for full-time staff include paid leave (annual, sick, and personal), medical insurance, and retirement. Other benefits such as subsidized child care or continued education may be negotiated as unique to the situation. Benefits for part-time staff (who are employed at least half-time) are available on a prorated basis.

Staff members who are satisfied with their jobs and whose health is protected are more likely to convey positive feelings toward children, are better able to give utmost attention to teaching and caring for children, to remain in their positions for longer periods of time, and to consider early childhood teaching a viable long-term career option. Paid leave (usually 10 to 12 days each of sick and annual leave) is basic to a respectful work environment, recognizes the demands of the job, and is important to prevent employee burnout. Health insurance and retirement benefits greatly contribute to staff stability and commitment to the profession. Model Work Standards for early childhood programs to use as a guide for evaluating their own policies are available from the National Center for the Early

Childhood Work Force, 733 15th Street NW, Washington, DC 20005, 202-737-7700. Or to obtain a copy of *Fundamentals of Employee Benefit Programs*, contact Employee Benefits Research Institute (EBRI), 410-516-6946.

E-5. Records

Records are kept on the program and related operations such as attendance records of staff and children. Confidential personnel files are kept including resumes with record of experiences, transcripts of education, documentation of ongoing professional development, and results of performance evaluation.

Health records are addressed in **H-2** and **H-3**.

E-6. Governance

In cases where the program is governed by a board of directors, the program has written policies defining roles and responsibilities of board members and staff. Board members and other administrators such as school principals are informed about the elements and methods involved in implementing a high-quality, developmentally appropriate program. Records of board meetings are kept.

In various types of programs, Board members are ultimately responsible for program operations and requirements such as maintaining the quality required for accreditation. Therefore, it is essential that Board members are educated about these responsibilities. Written policies and records delineating responsibilities facilitate communication and decision making.

Staff and administrators plan and consult together frequently about the program, children, and families.

E-7. Fiscal records are kept with evidence of long-range budgeting and sound financial planning. Operating budgets are prepared annually and there is a quarterly reconciliation of expenses to budget.

Budgets are essential tools for monthly financial planning and decision making. Budgets should be projected for at least one year.

E-8. Insurance

Accident protection and liability insurance coverage is maintained for children and adults. Vehicle insurance is maintained on any vehicle owned or leased by the facility and used to transport children.

Insurance protection is an essential ingredient of sound management. In recognition of the fact that high-quality programs are a lower risk, NAEYC's insurance provider, Forrest T. Jones, offers discounts on insurance policies to NAEYC-accredited programs (contact NAEYC for more information).

Staff communication and support

E-9. Staff interactions reflect mutual trust, respect, and support for each other. Staff members seek out and acknowledge each others' ideas and opinions. Staff give positive recognition to each others' skills and accomplishments. Staff provide appropriate supports for each other in dealing with stress. Staff respect each others' right to confidentiality. Staff communicate with each other to ensure smooth operations.

One of the most important dimensions of the work climate in early childhood programs is collegiality among the staff (Bloom 1996). Positive, supportive, trusting relationships among staff provide a vital framework for ensuring that high-quality care and education are provided for children.

E-10. Staff and administrators plan and consult together frequently about the program, children, and families. Staff plan and consult together. Regular staff meetings are held for staff to consult on program planning, to plan for implementing and attaining goals, to plan for individual children, and to discuss program and working conditions (may be meetings of small group or full staff). Teachers are provided weekly paid planning time, away from responsibility for children.

Evidence of consultation can include meetings of small groups as well as full staff and also informal sharing of ideas and resources among staff. Meeting time should be allotted for all the above purposes, not just to discuss complaints or problems.

E-11. Staff members are provided space and time away from children during the day. When staff work directly with children for more than 4 hours, they are provided breaks of at least 15 minutes in each 4-hour period.

Working with young children can be exhausting and emotionally draining. In

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order to provide good quality care and personal attention to children, staff must have an opportunity to take a break. Staff need both time away from children and a separate, private place where they can rest and refresh themselves for their jobs. Such attention to adult needs indirectly affects the quality of life provided for children (see **G-10**).

E-12. Staff keep information about children, families, and associates confidential. Staff refrain from commenting about children or families in the presence of other adults or children.

The relationship that develops between staff, parents, and children in high-quality programs is often personal, thus requiring that staff maintain high standards of professional and ethical conduct at all times. (See Appendix F for NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct.)

E-13. An appropriate person on-site is designated to assume authority and to take action in an emergency, in the event of the director's absence.

The functions assigned to the administrator of a program continue regardless of an individual's absence. Therefore, it is essential that a knowledgeable, responsible person is designated and present at all times.

F. Staffing

GOAL: The program is sufficiently staffed to meet the needs of and promote the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children.

RATIONALE: An important determinant of the quality of a program is the way in which it is staffed. Well-organized staffing patterns facilitate individualized, responsive care and support learning . Research strongly suggests that smaller group sizes and larger numbers of staff to children are related to positive outcomes for children such as increased interaction among adults and children; enhanced language, social, and intellectual development in children; and less aggression, more cooperation among children.

F-1. The number of children in a group is limited *in accordance with NAEYC criteria* to facilitate adult-child interaction and constructive activity among children. Groups of children may be age-determined or multi-age. Maximum group size is determined by the distribution of ages in the group. Group size limitations will vary depending on the type of activity, whether it is indoors or outdoors; the inclusion of children with special needs; and other factors. A *group* is the number of children assigned to a staff member or team of staff members occupying an individual classroom or well-defined space, with clear physical barriers

Sufficient staff are available to provide frequent personal contact, meaningful learning activities, and immediate care as needed.

that prevent intermingling of children, within a larger room (see Table 1 on page 47).

Research has demonstrated that limited group size is related to positive outcomes for children, such as more frequent interaction with adults and more involvement in activities (see Cost, Quality, & Child Outcomes Study Team 1995; Ruopp et al. 1979). Group size has both physical and psychological dimensions that vary with the age of the child. For example, strict interpretation of the number of infants permitted in a group in relationship to the minimum amount of space allotted per child has had the unintended negative effect of some programs placing infants in tiny rooms. The concept of *group* itself is different for children under 3. Babies and toddlers are relatively egocentric and do not function as a group the same way preschoolers and school-age children do. The number of children in a group and the number of adults to children must be considered together. A group of 20 with 2 adults is not the same psychological environment for children as a group of 40 with 4 adults even though each situation has a staff-child ratio of 1:10.

F-2. Sufficient staff with primary responsibility for children are available to provide frequent personal contact; meaningful learning activities; supervision; and to offer immediate care as needed. The ratio of staff to children will vary depending on the age of the children, the type of program activity, the inclusion of children with special needs, the time of day, and other factors. Staffing patterns should provide for adult supervision of children at all times and the availability of an additional adult to assume responsibility if one adult takes a break or must respond to an emergency. Staff-child ratios are maintained in relation to size of group (see Table 1). Multiage grouping is both permissible and desirable. When no infants are included, the staff-child ratio and group size requirements shall be based on the age of the majority of the children in the group. When infants are included, ratios and group size for infants must be maintained. Staff-child ratios are maintained through provision of substitutes when regular staff members are absent. Substitutes for infants and toddlers are familiar with the children and oriented to children's schedules and individual differences in a systematic way before assignment. When volunteers are used to meet the staff-child ratios, they must also meet the appropriate staff qualifications unless they are parents (or guardians) of the children (see D-2). Volunteers who work with children complete a pre-assignment orientation and participate in ongoing professional development.

Both group size and staff-child ratio are determined on the basis of number and ages of children enrolled.

F-3. Each staff member has primary responsibility for and develops deeper attachment to an identified group of children. Every attempt is

Table 1.
Recommended staff-child ratios within group size*

	Group size										
Age of children	**6**	**8**	**10**	**12**	**14**	**16**	**18**	**20**	**22**	**24**	**30**
Infants (birth to 12 months)	1:3	1:4									
Toddlers (12 to 24 months)	1:3	1:4	1:5	1:4							
2-year-olds (24 to 30 months)		1:4	1:5	1:6							
2½-year-olds (30 to 36 months)			1:5	1:6	1:7						
3-year-olds					1:7	1:8	1:9	1:10			
4-year-olds						1:8	1:9	1:10			
5-year-olds						1:8	1:9	1:10			
Kindergartners								1:10	1:11	1:12	
6- to 8-year-olds								1:10	1:11	1:12	1:15
9- to 12-year-olds										1:12	115

*Smaller group sizes and lower staff-child rations have been found to be strong predictors of compliance with indicators of quality such as positive interactions among staff and children and developmentally appropriate curriculum. Variations in group sizes and ratios are acceptable in cases where the program demonstrates a very high level of compliance with criteria for interactions (A), curriculum (B), staff qualifications (D), health and safety (H), and physical environment (G).

made to have continuity of adults who work with children within each day and over extended periods of time (could be several years of the child's enrollment) particularly infants and toddlers. Infants and toddlers spend the majority of the time interacting with the same person each day. The program is organized and staffed so as to minimize the number of group transitions an individual child experiences during the time period the child is enrolled in the program. Every attempt is made to maintain continuity of relationships between teachers and children and among groups of children.

Continuity of relationships among adults and children is an important contributor to healthy child development. Young children develop optimally through close, affectionate relationships with a limited number of other people, particularly adults. The development of attachment relationships is particularly important for infants and toddlers. Staff should be able to emotionally attach themselves to young children while recognizing that the child's primary attachment bond is with their family. The organizational structure and policies of the program (for example, how often and when children are moved to different groups) should contribute to maintaining continuity of relationships. Programs should determine how many group transitions an individual child would experience over the number of years of enrollment in the program and establish policies that support rather than disrupt continuity of relationships among children and adults. Keeping children together as a group with the same staff members for extended periods of time can lessen the negative effective of staff turnover when it occurs.

F-4. A majority of the child's day is spent in activities utilizing recommended staff-child ratios and group size limitations while minimizing the number of transitions or regroupings children experience, and maintaining relationships among groups of children as much as possible.

Continuity of relationships and communication is impossible when children experience too many regroupings or transitions during the day. The staffing pattern should be organized to maintain compliance with staff-child ratio and group size criteria while at the same time achieving the goal of minimizing disruption for children, sustaining friendships among children, and relationships with adults.

G. Physical Environment

GOAL: The indoor and outdoor physical environment fosters optimal growth and development through opportunities for exploration and learning.

RATIONALE: The physical environment affects the behavior and development of the people, both children and adults, who live and work in it. The quality of the physical space and materials provided affects the level of involvement of the children and the quality of interaction between adults and children. The amount, arrangement, and use of space, both indoors and outdoors, are to be evaluated.

G-1. The indoor and outdoor environments are safe, clean, attractive, and spacious. There is enough usable space indoors so children are not crowded. There is a *minimum* of 35 square feet of usable playroom floor space indoors per child and a *minimum* of 75 square feet of play space outdoors per child. Program staff have access to the designated space in sufficient time to prepare the environment before children arrive.

Limited indoor space may be offset by sheltered outdoor space where climate permits reliance on outdoor space for activities often conducted indoors. Limited outdoor space may be offset by a greater amount of indoor space (such as a gym), that permits an equivalent activity program. Space requirements are stated as **minimums.** More space than minimum is preferred—50 square feet per child indoors and 100 square feet outdoors are preferable—although too much space can be a problem if not properly arranged. The key word is *usable*—space that is used for permanent storage should not be measured when assessing amount of space. The required amount of outdoor space is indicated by the number of children using the space at one time. Use of outdoor space should be scheduled to allow for enough space and also to prevent competition among age groups. Very young children should have separate time or space outdoors. Observation of interactions between children and involvement of children in activity are good indicators of whether sufficient space is available. When space is shared with other programs or organizations, prior access for staff preparation is critical.

The environment should be attractive, colorful, and have children's work and other pictures displayed at children's eye level. The safety and cleanliness of the environment are addressed in the criteria for Health and Safety (Component **H**).

G-2. Activity areas are defined clearly by spatial arrangement. Space is arranged so that children can work individually, together in small groups, or in a large group. Space is arranged to provide clear pathways for children to move from one area to another and to minimize distractions.

The arrangement of space is as important as the amount. Children should be able to move freely from one activity to another without unduly disturbing others. Activity areas should be divided so that children in one area are not distracted by those in other areas. Well-organized space invites desired behaviors and facilitates positive interaction between people and active involvement with materials.

G-3. The space for children (3 years and older) is arranged to facilitate a variety of small group and/or individual activities including block building, sociodramatic play, art, music, science, math, manipulatives, and quiet book reading and writing. Other activities such as sand/water play and woodworking are also available on occasion. Carpeted space as well as hard surfaces such as wood floors and ample crawling/toddling areas are provided for infants and young toddlers. Sturdy furniture is provided so nonwalkers can pull themselves up or balance themselves while walking. School-age children are provided separate space arranged to facilitate a variety of age-appropriate activities and permit sustained work on projects.

This criterion refers to activities rather than areas of the room. For example, science and math are activities; they are not limited to parts of the room although the room should be arranged so that they do occur. Block building, sociodramatic play, and book reading are facilitated by separate areas. Art and cooking projects that are messy should be near a source of water. School-age children must have a separate space.

Ample crawling/toddling areas are provided for infants and young toddlers.

G-4. Age-appropriate materials and equipment of sufficient quantity, variety, and durability are readily accessible to children and arranged on low, open shelves to promote independent use by children. Materials are rotated and adapted to maintain children's interest.

Materials and equipment are evaluated on several levels. A variety of equipment is needed as well as appropriate kinds. All age groups need active play equipment, materials that stimulate the senses, construction materials, manipulative toys, dramatic play equipment, art materials, and books and music. (See **B-5** and Appendix A for some examples of developmentally appropriate equipment for various age groups.) Children are more likely to use materials constructively and creatively if materials are accessible to them, organized to promote independent use, and periodically changed to provide variety.

G-5. Individual spaces for children to store their personal belongings are provided.

Personal storage space may be provided in a variety of ways, but children and adults should have individual spaces for storing personal belongings, such as extra clothing and art work to be taken home, that are easily identified. If hanging space for clothing is not available, there should be a designated space for children to place their coats, backpacks, or other belongings.

G-6. Private areas are available indoors and outdoors for children to have solitude.

Children who spend long periods of time in group settings need opportunities for privacy and solitude. Such provision can be made by environmental arrangement and planning, both indoors and outdoors. These areas should be easily supervised by adults. Privacy can be provided by using equipment such as tunnels and playhouses, or small enclosed spaces in room arrangement.

G-7. The environment includes soft elements such as rugs, cushions, or rocking chairs.

Softness can be provided in many ways—cozy furniture such as rockers and pillows; carpeting; grass outdoors; adults who cuddle children on their laps; and soft materials such as play dough, water, sand, and finger paint.

G-8. Sound-absorbing materials are used to cut down on excessive noise.

Noise is to be expected and even desired in environments for children. The purpose of this criterion is not to eliminate noise. Acoustical building materials, strategically placed carpets, and other similar sound-absorbing materials can be very effective in minimizing excessive noise and enhancing the quality of the living environment for both children and adults. Excessive environmental noise can be fatiguing and cause stress.

G-9. Outdoor areas include a variety of surfaces such as soil, sand, grass, hills, flat sections, and hard areas for wheel toys. The outdoor area includes shade; open space; digging space; and a variety of equipment for riding, climbing, balancing, and individual play. The outdoor area is protected by fences or by natural barriers from access to streets or other dangers.

Outdoor areas will vary depending on geographic location. This criterion emphasizes that a variety of types of surface and equipment be provided. While hills and shade are not always available, the environment can sometimes be supplemented with other materials such as awnings, inclines, or ramps. The outdoor area must be fenced or protected by natural barriers from streets and other dangerous areas. The criterion implies that an outdoor play space be provided or arranged, such as pre-arranged use of a neighboring community or school playground, if conditions protect children's health and safety.

G-10. The work environment for staff, including classrooms and staff rooms, is comfortable, well-organized, and in good repair. The environment includes a place for adults to take a break or work away from children, an adult-sized bathroom, a secure place for staff to store their personal belongings, and an administrative area that is separated from the children's areas for planning or preparing materials.

Working conditions for adults are important contributors to job satisfaction and performance. Early childhood programs are usually designed primarily for children, but the adults who work there also have physical, social, and emotional needs that must be met if they are to do the best job possible with children (see Bloom 1996).

H. Health and Safety

GOAL: The health and safety of children and adults are protected and enhanced.

RATIONALE: The provision of a safe and healthy environment is essential. No amount of good curriculum planning or positive adult-child interaction can compensate for an environment that is dangerous for children. Good quality early childhood programs act to prevent illness and accidents, are prepared to deal with emergencies should they occur, and also educate children concerning safe and healthy practices.

H-1. The program presents valid certification that it is in compliance with all legal requirements for protection of the health and safety of children in group settings, such as building codes, sanitation, water quality, and fire protection. The program is licensed to operate by the appropriate local/state agencies. The program maintains a high level of compliance with licensing standards, free of a record of repeated serious violations. If exempt from licensing, the program demonstrates compliance with its own state or local community's building code, sanitation code, and licensing code for early childhood programs/child care centers subject to licensing. Compliance is demonstrated by a record of an inspection by a qualified building and fire inspector and sanitarian.

Most states require licenses to operate group care facilities for children. Licensing codes commonly include provisions for safety and health such as building conditions, sanitation, water quality, and fire protection, although state licensing standards vary considerably in all areas. The health and safety requirements in these criteria are designed to provide a baseline of agreement across states. As a prerequisite to accreditation, programs must be licensed to operate by the appropriate state/local agencies. In states that have no regulations for certain types of programs, those programs are eligible to apply for accreditation if they obtain the proper building inspections.

Excellent resources are available for guiding specific interpretations of health and safety issues: *Caring for Our Children–National* Health *and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs*, a publication of the American Public Health Association and American Academy of Pediatrics (1992); *Healthy Young Children: A Manual for Programs* (Kendrick, Kaufmann, & Messenger, 1995, available from NAEYC); and *Stepping Stones to Using Caring For Our Children: Protecting Children From Harm*, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, 4200 East 9th Avenue, Box C-287, Denver, CO 80262, 800-598-KIDS. Because health and safety standards are continually being revised in response to new medical information, NAEYC strongly recommends that programs regularly access current information through the Internet.

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H-2. Each adult (paid staff and volunteers) is free of physical and psychological conditions that might adversely affect children's health. Staff receive pre-employment tuberculosis tests and evaluation of any infection. Hiring practices include careful checking of personal references of all potential new employees or volunteers. New staff members serve a probationary employment period during which the director or other qualified person makes a professional judgment as to their physical and psychological competence for working with children.

Tuberculosis tests should be obtained every two years or as required by local authorities. *Evaluation of any infection* refers to significant fever or contagious condition.

Screening for psychological health is less easily achieved. Most states require criminal background checks and a system is in place for accessing such information. In addition, new staff members should undergo a probationary period of employment during which they are closely observed for appropriate temperament and personality needed for successfully working with young children. All staff members who work directly with children should be periodically evaluated using classroom observation, parent information, and close observation of children assigned to that individual's care (see **J-1**). Volunteers should be similarly screened for physical and psychological health and should work under supervision of a qualified staff person.

H-3. A current, written record is maintained for each child, including the results of a complete health evaluation by an approved health care resource within six months prior to enrollment, record of immunizations, emergency contact information, names of people authorized to pickup the child, and pertinent health history (such as allergies or chronic conditions). Children have received the necessary immunizations as recommended for their age group by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Written health records must be current and demonstrate regular health evaluations; the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends every six months for children under 2, every year for children 2 to 6, and every two years for school-agers. Children's records should show evidence of having had a complete physical within six months prior to enrollment. Records should be updated regularly. Immunization standards of the United States Public Health Service or the American Academy of Pediatrics are acceptable, but programs should be aware that these standards are regularly updated due to new medical discoveries and information.

Emergency contact information is particularly important and should be readily available. Current information on people authorized to call for the child is necessary since such arrangements may change frequently. Allergy information and other such essential health information should be conspicuously posted for all personnel to see.

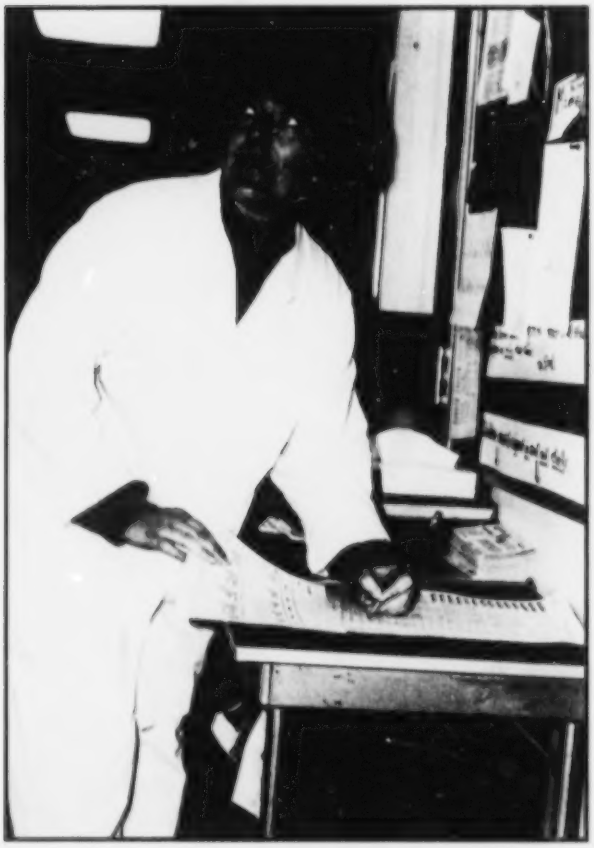
Exceptions to this criterion could be granted in instances where such health practices are against the religious beliefs of the family.

H-4. The program has a written policy, given to all families, specifying the conditions under which sick children are to be excluded, included but isolated, or included in the regular classroom, in accordance with licensing and public health regulations of the location. When sick children are permitted to attend, the decision must be based on the comfort of ill children, the protection of well children and staff, the resources available to the program to meet any special care that is required, and the needs of families.

A written policy statement is required so that parents and staff will share a common understanding and ease the burden that child illness creates for everyone.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that programs make reasonable accommodations for children with disabilities and chronic illness. The early childhood program must consider each case individually and comply with the requirements of ADA.

Children with common colds do not need to stay home. Usually the child has already exposed others before seeming sick. Many illnesses stop being contagious once treatment is started while with some conditions children are no longer contagious when they become symptomatic. To exclude or isolate children with noncontagious, mild illnesses can be an unfair and unwarranted hardship on the



Provisions are made for safe arrival and departure of all children which also allow for interaction among teachers and families. A system exists for ensuring that children are released only to authorized people.

family and the child. The inclusion of sick children requires that the program have additional staff members and good consultation with an approved health resource. Exclusion is warranted for significant fever (101° F., 38° C.); for uncontrolled diarrhea, defined as an increased number of stools compared with the child's normal pattern and that are not contained by the diaper or toilet use; for contagious illness such as mumps; or contagious infestation such as head lice. Guidelines for excluding children from early childhood programs can be found in *Healthy Young Children: A Manual for Programs* (Kendrick, Kaufmann, & Messenger 1995; NAEYC #704) and in *Preparing for Illness: A Joint Responsibility for Parents and Caregivers* (NAEYC #706), developed by the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and available for $2 from NAEYC, #706. Contact the American Academy of Pediatrics or the American Public Health Association for current recommendations regarding attendance of asymptomatic human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infected adults and children.

H-5. Provisions are made for safe arrival and departure of all children which also allow for interaction among teaching staff and families. A system exists for ensuring that children are released only to authorized people. A procedure for accountability when a child fails to show for the program is in place and followed. A system exists to ensure the safety of children whose parents have agreed to allow their older school-age children to leave the program on their own. The system includes written agreements between parents and the program and consistent daily sign-in and out procedures for children.

Arrival and departure are frequently the most important and valued communication times for parents and teaching staff members. These transitions must be carefully planned since traffic accidents are the leading cause of death among young children. Mechanisms for ensuring the release of children only to authorized persons are essential for the protection of the children's physical and mental well-being.

H-6. If transportation is provided for children by the program, vehicles are equipped with age-appropriate restraint devices. The program presents certification that vehicles used in transporting children are appropriately licensed, inspected, and maintained.

The appropriate restraints (infant safety seats, toddler auto seats, auto booster seats, and/or safety belts) must be used whenever the vehicle is in motion. Appropriate supervision for children under 6 requires that attendants in addition to the driver must be present. All drivers must be appropriately licensed and trained in child passenger safety precautions. No child should be left unattended in a vehicle. Vehicles used in transporting children must be appropriately licensed, inspected, and maintained.

H-7. Children are under adult supervision at all times. There is specific accountability for each child by one staff member. Systems are in place for accounting for children's whereabouts at regular intervals, especially during transition. Families are informed about procedures and policies for field trips. Families are notified of all activities outside the program. Field trips are accompanied by parents and other volunteers to ensure adequate supervision. Field trips are preplanned and emergency procedures are prepared. Transportation meets safety requirements (see H-6).

The nature of the supervision will vary depending on the age of the child. An infant should not be left unattended particularly when eating, bathing, or while on high surfaces, nor while sleeping. School-age children should have opportunities to develop independence. If older children are not in the direct vision of adults, adults are aware of where they are and what they are doing.

H-8. Staff are alert to the health of each child. Individual medical problems and accidents are recorded and reported to staff and families.

Detection of physical illness is an important skill. Staff members should be trained to observe signs of illness and also to detect early developmental problems. Accurate record keeping is essential.

H-9. Suspected incidents of child abuse and/or neglect by families, staff, volunteers, or others are reported to the appropriate local agencies.

Staff must know their legal and professional responsibilities about reporting suspected child abuse and/or neglect as well as appropriate processes for doing so. Such reporting applies to suspected incidents by family members, staff members, and others.

H-10. At least one staff member, who has certification in emergency pediatric first-aid treatment including CPR for infants and children, and emergency management of choking from a licensed health professional, is always present.

Training in first aid may be obtained from the American Red Cross or an equivalent agency. Training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation can be obtained from the American Red Cross or the American Heart Association. The majority of staff members should regularly receive first-aid training, because this is the only way to assure that a trained individual is always present.

H-11. A plan exists for dealing with medical emergencies. The emergency medical plan includes a source of emergency medical care who has been previously informed of intention to use, written parental consent for emergency treatment, and arrangements for transportation. Adequate first-aid supplies are readily available.

First-aid supplies must be regularly checked for freshness and supply.

Necessary first-aid supplies include bandages, ice pack, sterile gauze, adhesive tape, medicated soap, cotton, and tweezers.

H-12. Children are dressed appropriately for outdoor activities. A change of clothing is available. In full-day programs a change of clothes should be available for each child, while in half-day programs only some extra clothing need be available.

Children are dressed by families and criteria cannot be established for families to meet. Therefore, this criterion is addressed to staff. Appropriate dress is essential for children to fully participate in all facets of the program. Appropriate dress for outdoor activities is essential for maintaining health. Extra clothing should be kept for each child in case of accidents. It is desirable that children dress so as not to be inhibited from participation in messy art activities or active play.

H-13. The facility is cleaned daily to disinfect bathroom fixtures and remove trash. Infants' equipment is washed and disinfected at least twice a week. Toys which are mouthed are washed daily. Soiled diapers are disposed of or held for laundry in closed containers inaccessible to the children. After each diaper change the changing table is disinfected.

Regular cleaning of the facility and equipment is necessary to prevent spread of infection. Daily cleansing of toys mouthed by infants is particularly important. A broad-spectrum disinfectant capable of destroying bacteria and viruses should be used. Not all commercial preparations meet these standards. The Centers for Disease Control recommend a bleach (hypochlorite) solution of 1 tablespoon of bleach per 1 quart of water (or ¼ cup bleach per 1 gallon of water), prepared daily. This solution can be used wherever these Criteria require disinfectant. The solution should be kept in a spray container accessible to staff but out of reach of children. (This solution should *not* be kept in a locked cabinet; it must be easily accessible.)

Vigorous attention to sanitation procedures will help eliminate outbreaks of infection among children. Separate grouping of children in diapers, where developmentally appropriate, will also help to limit the potential for spread of infection.

H-14. Staff (and volunteers) wash their hands with liquid soap and water upon arrival, before preparing food, eating or feeding a child, and after diapering, assisting children with toileting or nose wiping, and after handling animals. Staff are familiar with and implement universal precautions to prevent transmission of blood-borne diseases like HIV and hepatitis B. Signs are posted reminding staff of proper handwashing procedures (see Appendix B for descriptions of proper handwashing procedures and universal precautions). A sink with running water of comfortable temperature is adjacent to the diapering area.

The best way to control the spread of any infection in a group program is for

everyone present to practice proper hygiene. Staff handwashing is one of the most effective means for preventing spread of infection. Staff should wash hands after contact with any potentially infectious material, while universal precautions are necessary in the event of contact with blood or body fluids containing blood. Orientation and professional development should emphasize the importance of this process. Providing hand lotion for staff promotes handwashing.

H-15. The building and all equipment are maintained in a safe, clean condition and in good repair (for example, there are no sharp edges, splinters, protruding or rusty nails, or missing parts). Glass and trash is removed from children's play areas. Outdoor sandboxes are covered when not in use. Infants' and toddlers' toys are large enough to prevent swallowing or choking.

Maintenance of equipment and facility are as important as their initial selection and purchase. Staff members or parents should be assigned to regularly monitor the maintenance and repair of equipment. While certain maintenance responsibilities are of interest to children and have educational value, staff should not spend large amounts of time in housekeeping chores while children are present.

Covering outdoor sandboxes, when not in use, protects them from animals and other sources of contamination.

Children are educated by staff members concerning handwashing procedures, use of running water, liquid soap, rubbing, and single use of disposable towels.

H-16. Individual bedding is washed at least once a week and used by only one child between washes. Individual cribs, cots, and mats are washed if soiled. Sides of infants' cribs are in a locked position when occupied.

Requirements for bedding apply only to programs in which children are present for more than four hours. Sufficient space should be provided between cribs and cots so that children cannot touch one another and so that rapid evacuation is possible, if necessary. Research has found that placing young infants on their backs to sleep lowers the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

H-17. Toilets, drinking water, and handwashing facilities are easily accessible to children. Liquid soap and disposable towels are provided. Children wash hands after toileting and before and after meals. Staff assist infants and toddlers with face- and handwashing as needed. Children are educated by staff members concerning handwashing procedures, use of running water, liquid soap, rubbing, and single use of disposable towels. Hot water temperature does not exceed 120° F. at outlets used by children. The waterplay table is cleaned and sanitized with a bleach solution daily.

While child-sized facilities for toileting, drinking, and handwashing are desirable, they are not required as long as such facilities are made accessible to children through use of nonslip stools. Some child development experts feel that use of adult-sized equipment is closer to the home environment. Nevertheless, child-sized facilities do promote independent use by children and are therefore desirable, if possible. Children must be educated by staff members concerning handwashing procedures.

H-18. All rooms are well-lighted and ventilated. Stairways are well-lighted and equipped with handrails. Electrical outlets are covered with protective caps. Floor coverings are attached to the floor or backed with nonslip materials. The program provides certification that nontoxic building materials, no lead paint or asbestos, are used in the facility (or lead abatement procedures are in place for older facilities).

All precautions possible need to be taken to prevent falls and accidents. No lead paint or asbestos may be used in the facility.

H-19. All pieces of playground equipment are surrounded by a resilient surface (fine, loose sand; wood chips; wood mulch; fine gravel) of an acceptable depth or by rubber mats manufactured for such use, consistent with the guidelines of the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials, extending beyond the external limits of the piece of equipment for at least four feet beyond the fall zone. All play equipment is constructed and installed in such a manner as to be safe for use by children (height is not excessive; equipment is not a potential source of entrapment.) There are no pinch, crush, or shear points on or under the equipment. The program submits

verification that climbing equipment, swings, and large pieces of furniture are securely anchored if the anchoring cannot be easily observed.

Falls from play equipment onto hard surfaces are one of the leading causes of serious injuries and death of young children. Active play is necessary for optimal physical development but play equipment must be made as safe as possible for children. An excellent resource that provides guidelines for environmental safety both indoors and outdoors is *Caring for Our Children–National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs* by the American Public Health Association and American Academy of Pediatrics (1992). The Consumer Product Safety Commission also sets standards for playground equipment safety. (See Table 2 for recommendations on surfacing from the Consumer Product Safety Commission.)

Table 2.
Loose-fill playground surfacing materials: Depth needed

Height	**Type and minimum uncompressed** (not packed down) **depth at point of impact** (more must be installed to account for scatter)
5'	6" of fine sand 6" of coarse sand 6" of medium gravel
6'	6" of double-shredded bark mulch 6" of uniform wood chips 6" of fine gravel
7'	6" of wood mulch 9" of uniform wood chips 9" of fine gravel
9'	12" of fine sand
10'	9" of wood mulch 9" of double-shredded bark mulch 12" of fine gravel
11'	12" of wood mulch 12" of double-shredded bark mulch

Adapted from "Critical Heights (in feet) of Tested Materials," Table 2, page 21. For characteristics (fall-absorbing characteristics, installation/maintenance, advantages and disadvantages) of organic and inorganic loose-fill materials and of unitary synthetic materials, see Appendix C, page 29–31. Loose-fill surfacing materials in list above are described in Appendix D, page 31. *Handbook for Public Playground Safety.* Pub. No. 325, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 1994. Used with permission.

H-20. All chemicals and potentially dangerous products such as medicines or cleaning supplies are stored in original, labeled containers in locked cabinets inaccessible to children. Medication is administered to children only when a written order has been submitted by a parent, and the medication is consistently administered by a designated staff member.

No poisonous materials are accessible to children. No poisonous plants are permitted. Prescription medication should be accompanied by written instructions from physician including prescription number, name of medication, date filled, child's name, physician's name, and directions for dosage. When no longer needed, medications should be returned to parents or destroyed. Products that are clearly labeled "keep out of reach of children" should be kept in locked cabinets. This does not apply to the *diluted bleach* solution used frequently to disinfect the changing area which may be made inaccessible to children without being locked. (See **H-13.**)

H-21. All staff and volunteers are familiar with primary and secondary evacuation routes and practice evacuation procedures monthly with children. Written emergency evacuation procedures are posted in conspicuous places.

Evacuation procedures should provide for calm and rapid protection of all children from injury or trauma, access to a source of emergency medical care that has been previously notified of intention to use, notification of parents, and consideration of the needs of uninjured children for whom adequate adult supervision and reassurance are required.

H-22. Staff and volunteers are familiar with emergency procedures and procedures for severe storm warnings. Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are provided and periodically checked. Emergency telephone numbers are posted by telephones.

Emergency procedures should be developed for severe storms such as tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, landslides, and other phenomena unique to the area. Posted emergency telephone numbers should include police, fire, rescue, and poison control services.

I. Nutrition and Food Service

GOAL: The nutritional needs of children and adults are met in a manner that promotes physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.

RATIONALE: Children must be provided with adequate nutrition and also must be educated concerning good eating habits.

I-1. Meals and/or snacks are planned to meet the child's nutritional requirements as recommended by the Child and Adult Care Food Program of the United States Department of Agriculture in proportion to the amount of time the child is in the program each day. Amount of food served is adjusted according to the age of the children since infants and toddlers require smaller amounts of food served more frequently and school-age children require much more food than preschoolers.

See Appendix C for United States Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program recommendations. An excellent resource for guidance on nutrition and food service is *Healthy Young Children: A Manual for Programs* (Kendrick, Kaufmann, & Messenger 1995).

I-2. Menu information is provided to families. Feeding times and food consumption information is provided to families of infants and toddlers at the end of each day.

Families need to know not only what is planned but also what is actually served. This is particularly true for very young children who cannot communicate about food intake. Providing information about children's nutritional needs is especially important when families rather than the program supply the child's food. See *Healthy Young Children: A Manual for Programs* (Kendrick, Kaufmann, & Messenger 1995) for nutritious snack ideas to give to families.

Mealtimes need to be pleasant activities in which conversation is encouraged and independence fostered as appropriate.

I-3. Mealtimes promote good nutrition habits. Children are encouraged to serve and feed themselves, and assist with cleaning. Chairs, tables, and eating utensils are suitable for the size and developmental levels of the children. Meals and snacktimes are pleasant social and learning experiences for children, while respecting families' cultural preferences. Foods indicative of children's cultural backgrounds are served periodically. At least one adult sits with children during meals. Infants are held in an inclined position while bottle feeding.

The way mealtimes are handled varies with families' cultural perspectives. In general, mealtimes need to be pleasant activities in which conversation is encouraged and independence fostered as appropriate. Adults should interact with children during meals to provide a model of good nutrition habits for children. Bottles for infants must not be propped since propping is potentially dangerous and developmentally inappropriate for babies. Infants should be held during bottle feeding so social interaction can occur and feeding time encourages warm, affectionate, human contact.

I-4. If the program does not provide food, the program provides information for families about well-balanced meals that may be brought from home. Food brought from home is stored appropriately until served.

Food may be brought from home if it is stored appropriately. Readily perishable or readily contaminated food or drink should be refrigerated at or below 45° F. (7° C.). All readily perishable or readily contaminated hot food shall be kept at 140° F. (60° C.) or above. Frozen foods should be stored at 0° F. (-17° C.) or below.

I-5. Where food is prepared on the premises, the program verifies it is in compliance with legal requirements for nutrition and food service. Food may be prepared at an approved facility and transported to the program in appropriate sanitary containers and at appropriate temperatures.

States usually regulate food preparation and service. If the state does not have food preparation requirements, the center should demonstrate compliance with requirements for food service appearing in Appendix E. See **I-4** for appropriate storage procedures. An excellent resource for guiding specific interpretations of nutrition and food service issues is *Caring for Our Children—National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs*, by the American Public Health Association and American Academy of Pediatrics (1992).

J. Evaluation

GOAL: Systematic assessment of the effectiveness of the program in meeting its goals for children, families, and staff is conducted to ensure that good quality care and education are provided and maintained, and that the program continually strives for improvement and innovation.

RATIONALE: Ongoing and systematic evaluation is essential to improving and maintaining the quality of an early childhood program. Evaluation efforts are based on program goals and assessment of needs and identify both strengths and weaknesses of program components.

J-1. All staff, including the program administrator, are evaluated at least annually by the director or other appropriate supervisor. Results of evaluation are written and confidential. The evaluation includes classroom observation. Staff are informed of evaluation criteria in advance. Evaluation is based on the employee's job description and previously established goals for improvement. Staff have an opportunity to evaluate their own performance. A plan for staff training is generated from the evaluation process.

Evaluation of staff member's performance and appropriate feedback is important to maintain good quality care and education for children, and staff morale. Such evaluation should be used for planning professional development opportunities for staff (see **D-4**).

J-2. At least annually, administrators, families, staff, school-age children, and other routinely participating adults are involved in evaluating the program's effectiveness in meeting the needs of children and families. The program regularly establishes goals for continuous improvement and innovation.

Evaluation of the total program by all interested parties including children where appropriate should be based on the program's goals and objectives and

The program regularly establishes goals for continuous improvement and innovation.

identify the areas in need of improvement (see **E-1**). Such evaluation serves as feedback to administrators on their performance. All high-quality organizations, especially accredited programs, regularly explore new approaches and seek to continually improve and innovate (see Bloom 1996). Achieving accreditation should not be viewed as an end-product, but rather as part of an ongoing process of continuous quality improvement.

J-3. Individual descriptions of children's development and learning are written and compiled as a basis for planning appropriate learning activities, as a means of facilitating optimal development of each child, identifying children who may be in need of more systematic diagnosis of a learning or developmental problem, and for use in communications with families.

Descriptions of children's development and learning may consist of anecdotal records, classroom and playground observations, individually administered tests, locally or nationally developed progress checklists, dated compilations of children's work, and/or case studies. Assessment of children's progress is essential to individualize planning (see **B-3a**) and to knowledgeably communicate with families (see **C-5, C-6, C-9**). Systematic identification and diagnosis of children with possible learning or developmental problems is the responsibility of any program that serves young children (see **B-3**).

Appendix A
Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Throughout the Criteria for High-Quality Early Childhood Programs, reference is made to developmentally appropriate practices. For example, "developmentally appropriate materials are provided," "developmentally appropriate activities are planned," and "staff expectations of children's behavior are developmentally appropriate." The degree to which an early childhood program is developmentally appropriate is a critical determinant of the quality of the program.

NAEYC's position statement defining developmental appropriateness appear in a separate publication titled, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs, Revised Edition* (NAEYC #234). This book is available from NAEYC for $8.

A great deal of knowledge exists about how young children develop and learn, as well as the most effective ways for adults to support children's development and learning. Comprehensive knowledge of child development and learning and its implications for programming are the foundations of a good quality early childhood program. Program personnel, particularly those who have limited professional preparation in Early Childhood Education/Child Development, are encouraged to obtain *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs* and use it to supplement the interpretations of the accreditation Criteria that appear here.

Following are some examples of developmentally appropriate practices related to specific criteria as indicated. These examples are taken from the Early Childhood Classroom Observation, that is used in the accreditation process. The complete instrument appears in NAEYC's publication, *Guide to Accrediation,* which is part of the self-study materials.

A-5. **Teachers encourage children's development of independent functioning, as appropriate. Teachers foster the development of age-appropriate self-help skills such as picking up toys, wiping spills, personal grooming (toileting, handwashing), obtaining and caring for materials, and other skills.** (Cultural perspectives of family or community may influence expectations for independence.)

For example:

Infants: safe places for independent play.

Older infants: finger feeding self.

Toddlers: washing hands, selecting own toys.

Three and fours: dressing, picking up toys.

Fives: doing responsible jobs within the school building, setting table, cleaning, acquiring self-help skills.

School-agers: performing responsible jobs, participating in community activities.

A-6a. **Teachers facilitate the development of responsibility, self-regulation and self-control in children.**

For example:

Teachers set clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom behavior and in the case of older children, help them to set their own limits.

Teachers use children's mistakes as learning opportunities, describing the situation and encouraging children's evaluation of the problem rather than imposing the solution.

Teachers anticipate and eliminate potential problems, redirecting children to more acceptable behavior or activity.

Teachers listen and acknowledge children's feelings and frustrations and respond with respect.

Teachers guide children to resolve conflicts, and model skills that help children to solve their own problems.

Teachers encourage appropriate behavior, patiently reminding children of rules and their rationale as needed.

A-9a. **Teachers recognize and encourage pro-social behaviors among children, such as cooperation, taking turns, talking to solve problems, and concern for others. Expectations of children's social behavior are developmentally appropriate. Teachers support children's beginning friendships and provide opportunities for children to learn from each other as well as adults.**

For example:

Infants interact (look, touch gently, vocalize) freely with one another as teachers observe, alert to respond and model safe interaction when necessary.

Two pieces of the same popular equipment are available so toddlers are not forced to share too often.

Preschoolers are encouraged to cooperate in small groups.

Kindergartners work with small, flexible groups on extended projects; participate in group problem-solving.

School-agers have opportunities to participate in group games or to work or play alone.

B-5. Developmentally appropriate materials and equipment are available.

For example:

Infants/younger toddlers

Simple, lightweight, open-ended, easily washable toys such as containers, balls, pop-beads, nesting cups.
Rattles, squeak toys, action/reaction toys.
Cuddle toys.
Toys to mouth such as teethers, rings.
Pictures of real objects.
Crawling area with sturdy, stable furniture to pull self up.

Toddlers

Push and pull toys.
Stacking toys, large wooden spools/beads/cubes.
Sturdy picture books, music, toys.
Pounding bench, simple puzzles.
Play telephone, dolls, pretend toys.
Large paper, crayons.
Sturdy furniture to hold on to while walking.
Sand and water toys.

Preschoolers

Active play equipment for climbing and balancing.
Unit blocks and accessories.
Puzzles, manipulative toys.
Picture books, record/tapes, musical instruments.
Art materials such as finger and tempera paints, crayons, safe scissors, and paste.
Dramatic play materials such as dolls, dress-up clothes and props, child-sized furniture, puppets.
Sand and water toys.

Kindergartners

Active play equipment for climbing and balancing.
Unit blocks and accessories such as figures, signs, cars, trees
Construction materials.
Complex puzzles and manipulative toys for counting, sorting.
Picture books and early readers
Materials for writing and complex art projects,
Recordings/tapes, musical instruments, computers with appropriate software.
A variety of dramatic play materials and props
Board and card games

School-agers

Active play equipment and materials such as bats and balls for organized games.
Construction materials for woodworking, unit blocks, accessories for blocks.
Materials for hobby and art projects, science projects.
Materials for dramatics, cooking.
Books, recordings/tapes, musical instruments, computers
Board and card games.
Complex manipulative toys (connecting or interlocking toys) jigsaw puzzles.

B-7. Teachers provide a variety of developmentally appropriate activities, and materials that are selected to emphasize concrete experiential learning and to achieve the following goals:

B-7a. Foster positive identity and sense of emotional well-being.

For example:

Infants/toddlers

Hold and touch, make frequent eye contact, and communicate with babies especially during caregiving.

Talk and sing to babies.

Allow infants to achieve mastery of their bodies through self-initiated motor behavior such as rolling, sitting.

Allow toddlers to feed themselves and encourage their development of self-help skills when ready.

Encourage and support each toddler's developmental achievements such as pulling up self, walking, and climbing.

Listen and respond to toddler's emerging language.

Preschoolers

Allow time for children to talk about their interests, what they see and do.

Use children's names frequently in songs, games.

Display children's work and photos of children and their families.

Encourage children to draw pictures and tell stories about self, family, and cultural practices.

Provide many opportunities for children to initiate activity, develop and demonstrate control of their bodies and self-help skills.

Kindergartners

Provide learning experiences that respond to children's individual differences in ability and interests.

Display children's unique products and work.

Engage children in experiences that demonstrate the explicit valuing of each child, such as sending a card to a sick classmate.

Provide learning experiences in which children can succeed most of the tme and yet be challenged to work on the edge of their developing capabilities.

School-agers

Provide opportunities to express growing independence/self-reliance such as the ability to make choices, initiate own activities.

Allow opportunities to work or play alone.

Provide ways to ensure privacy.

Plan cooperative rather than competitive activities.

Recognize preference for self-selected peer groups.

Encourage children to draw and write stories about self, family, and cultural practices.

Display children's work and photos of children and their families.

Provide opportunities to explore cultural heritage.

B-7b. Develop social skills.

For example:

Infants/toddlers

Hold, pat, and touch babies.

Talk to, sign to, and play with each baby on a one-to-one basis.

Respond to and expand on cues coming from child.

Interpret infants' actions to other children to help them get along in the group. ("Mary had it first.")

Assist toddlers in social interaction.

Preschoolers

Create space and time for small groups of children to build blocks together or enjoy dramatic play.

Coach children who have difficulty entering a play situation or making constructive use of child-chosen activity.

Provide opportunities for sharing, caring, and helping, such as making cards for a sick child or caring for pets.

Explore ways to respond to biased comments and behaviors.

Kindergartners

Use a variety of ways of flexibly grouping children.

Provide opportunities for children to collaborate and cooperate during play and projects.

Coach children in social problem-solving and conflict resolution skills.

Engage children in setting and enforcing classroom rules.

Provide opportunities for sharing, caring, and helping, such as making cards for a sick child or caring for pets.

Provide opportunities to support children's beginning friendships.

School-agers

Arrange planned and spontaneous activities in team sports, group games, interest clubs, board and card games.

Allow time to sit and talk with friend or adult.

Focus on activities rather than outcomes (scores, winners).

B-7c. Encourage children to think, reason, question, and experiment.

For example,

Infants/toddlers

Provide an appropriately challenging, safe environment for infants and toddlers to explore and manipulate.

Provide light colorful objects for babies to look at which they can reach for and grasp.

Play naming and hiding games such as peek-a-boo, pat-a-cake.

Provide simple toys that respond to infants' initiations so they may pay attention to cause and effect.

Provide large containers full of objects for toddlers to carry, dump, and refill.

Help toddlers' developing awareness by reflecting their experiences. ("You're pointing to the street; is it because you hear the garbage truck?")

Provide opportunities for making choices without interfering with selections.

Avoid interruptions of children's activities.

Preschoolers

Plan activities for labeling, classifying, sorting objects by shape, color, size.

Discuss daily and weekly routines in terms of time concepts, season of the year.

Extend children's thinking and learning during activities by adding new materials, asking open-ended questions, offering ideas or suggestions, joining in their play, and providing assistance in solving problems.

Observe natural events such as seeds growing, life cycle of pets.

Create opportunities to use numbers, counting objects.

Take walks around building or neighborhood.

Plan trips to provide new learning experiences for preschoolers.

Encourage water and sand play.

Kindergartners

Provide opportunities to learn basic science and math concepts through sand and water exploration, constructing with blocks and working with levers, pulleys, scales, and other simple machines.

Involve children in observing and investigating natural events and objects, sorting and classifying, searching for patterns, noting differences and similarities, and in drawing and discussing what they see.

Engage children in sustained project work, seeking solutions to concrete problems; observe and record changes in the environment, work with tools.

Read for information and reference.

Engage children in representing their understanding in various ways, such as drawing, writing, speaking.

Plan trips to provide new learning experiences.

School-agers

Provide activities such as cooking, money-making projects, gardening, science experiments, trips in the community, interacting with visitors, multicultural experiences, computer projects.

Engage children in sustained project work, read for information and reference, take trips.

Provide opportunities to complete homework if desired including peer or adult tutoring for children who request assistance.

B-7d. Encourage language and literacy development.

For example,

Infants/ toddlers

Engage in many one-to-one, face-to-face interactions with infants and toddlers.

Look at simple books and pictures.

Talk in a pleasant, calm voice, using simple language and frequent eye contact while being responsive to the child's cues.

Verbally label objects and events within the infant's experience.

Respond to sounds infant makes, occasionally imitating infant's vocalization.

Describe children's and adult's actions and the events that occur in the child's environment.

Respond to toddlers' attempts at language in supportive ways, such as expanding their utterances and answering their questions, engaging in meaningful conversation about everyday experiences.

Preschoolers

Each day, read books and poems, recite nursery rhymes in small groups and individually.

Tell stories about experiences, talk about pictures, write down experience stories children dictate.

Provide time for conversation, ask child questions that require more than a one-word answer.

Answer children's questions.

Add more information to what a child says.

Label things in room, use written words with pictures and spoken language, provide a print-rich environment.

Use flannel board, puppets, songs, finger plays.

Encourage children's emerging interest in writing (scribbling, drawing, forming letters, and using "invented" spellings based on sounding out words).

Kindergartners

Actively work to increase children's vocabulary every day.

Help children develop book-handling skills and familiarity with the conventions of print (such as story/chapter titles, punctuation, and capital letters).

Help children develop the full range of strategies for reading, for instance, using letter-sound relationships, pictures, and their understanding of the text to figure out unknown words.

Provide many opportunities every day for children to write for reasons that make sense to them (such as making lists, labeling their work, and writing notes to their parents).

Give children frequent practice and help in composing, editing, and revising stories and other written products.

Observe and make plans to ensure each child's continual progress in oral language, reading, and writing.

School-agers

Provide opportunities to read books.

Write and produce plays, publish newspapers, write stories.

Share experiences with friends or adults.

Use audio-visual equipment such as tape recorders, computers.

Make own videotapes, recordings.

B-7e. Enhance physical development and skills.

For example,

Infants/toddlers

Allow infants' self-initiated motor development such as rolling, sitting, walking at their own pace.

Provide open carpeted space as well as hard surfaces such as wood floors for crawling.

Provide low sturdy furniture for child to pull up self or hold on to while walking.

Provide accessible outdoor activities for infants.

Provide simple objects infants may reach for and grasp.

Allow non-mobile infants to move and breathe comfortably, lying freely on their backs while looking about, kicking, reaching, practicing eye-hand coordination.

Allow mobile infants to move about freely, p lay with and explore a safe environment.

Provide time, space, and objects (ramps, platforms, low steps) for toddlers' active play such as sitting, walking, climbing, jumping.

Provide toddlers objects for carrying, such as baskets, large empty plastic bottles, balls.

Provide toddlers simple puzzzles, nesting toys, stacking toys, pop-beads, balls.

Preschoolers

Provide equipment, time, and space for active play such as jumping, running, balancing, climbing, riding tricycles.

Provide creative movement activity using obstacle course or activity songs and recordings.

Provide fine-motor activities such as complex manipulative toys, pegboards, puzzles, lacing cards and woodworking.

Provide art materials for drawing, modeling, writing.

Kindergartners

Provide equipment, time, and space for active play such as jumping rope, running, balancing, climbing, and playing group games.

Provide creative movement activity, music, songs and recordings.

Provide fine-motor activities such as jigsaw puzzles, sewing, woodworking, objects that can be taken apart and put back together, dolls and accessories.

Provide variety of art and writing materials and daily opportunities for drawing, painting, cutting and writing.

School-agers

Provide opportunities to get physical exercise, use variety of outdoor equipment.

Encourage participation in group games, individual and team sports.

Provide fine-motor activities and hobbies such as sewing, macrame, pottery, leatherwork, carpentry.

B-7f. Encourage and demonstrate sound health, safety, and nutritional practices.

For example,

All ages

Cook and serve a variety of nutritious foods.

Discuss good nutrition.

Do activities to develop safety awareness in the program, school, home, and community.

Encourage health practices such as washing hands, brushing teeth, getting regular exercise and enough rest.

Talk about visiting doctor, dentist.

For infants/toddlers: Describe routine health activities as they are implemented.

For preschoolers, kindergartners, and school-agers: Study topics such as human body, nutrition, life skills.

B-7g. Encourage creative expression, representation, and appreciation for the arts.

For example,

Infants/toddlers

Use occasional music for movement, singing, or listening.
Sign to baby, appreciate infants' vocalizations and sounds.
Display interesting things to look at.
Provide time and space for movement and play.
Encourage scribbling with crayons.

Preschoolers

Do creative art activities such as brush painting, drawing, collage, and playdough.
Provide time and space for dancing, movement activities, creative dramatics.
Do musical activities such as singing, listening to recordings, playing instruments.
Adult-made models, patterns, and pre-drawn forms are used infrequently.
Provide materials representative of a variety of cultures.

Kindergartners

Provide opportunities for children to represent ideas and feelings and learn fundamental concepts and skills in the fine arts.
Do creative art projects, painting, drawing, collage, and modeling.
Provide time and space for dancing, movement activities, creative dramatics.
Do musical activities such as singing, listening to recordings, playing instruments.
Adult-made models, patterns, and pre-drawn forms are used infrequently.
Provide visits by artists, materials representative of a variety of cultures.
Develop appreciation for the arts by taking trips to galleries, concerts, cultural events.

School-agers

Provide planned and spontaneous activities in arts and crafts such as mural and easel painting, ceramics, carpentry, weaving.
Encourage dancing, creative dramatics, listening to tapes, singing, playing instruments.
Provide materials representative of a variety of cultures.
Provide visits by artists, materials representative of a variety of cultures.
Develop appreciation for the arts by taking trips to galleries, concerts, cultural events.

B-7h. Respect cultural diversity.

For example:

All ages

Build sense of the group as a community, bringing each child's home culture and language into the shared culture of the school so each child feels accepted and gains a sense of belonging.
Provide books, materials, images, and experiences that reflect diverse cultures that children may not likely see, as well as those that represent their family life and cultural group.
Initiate discussions and activities to teach respect and appreciation for similarities and differences among people.
Talk positively about each child's physical characteristics, family, and cultural heritage.
Avoid stereotyping of any group through materials, objects, language.
Invite families' participation in all aspects of the program.
Take trips to museums, cultural resources of community.
Infuse all curriculum topics with diverse cultural perspectives, avoiding a "tourist" approach.

B-11. Routine tasks are incorporated into the program as a means of furthering children's learning, self-help, and social skills. Routines such as diapering, toileting, eating, dressing, and sleeping are handled in a relaxed, reassuring, and individualized manner based on developmental needs. Teachers plan with families to make toileting, feeding, and the development of other self-regulation skills a positive experience for children. Quiet activities are provided for children who are early risers and for children who do not nap.

Routine tasks are used as opportunities for pleasant conversation and playful interaction to bring about children's learning.

Self-help skills are encouraged as children are ready.

Routines are tailored to children's needs and rhythms as much as possible.

For example,

Respecting infants' individual sleeping schedules, providing alternatives to preschoolers who are early risers, offering kindergartners choices or permitting preferences whenever possible, providing school-agers with a place to rest if they choose, respecting school-agers' increasing interest in personal grooming.

Appendix B
Handwashing

Adults

- Wash hands upon arrival.
- Wash hands **before** preparing food, eating, or feeding a child.
- Wash hands **after**
  –toileting self or a child
  –handling body secretions (e.g., changing diapers, cleaning up a child who has vomited or spit up, wiping a child's nose, handling soiled clothing or other contaminated items)
- Post signs to remind staff and children to wash their hands in the toilet room, the kitchen, and the area where diapers are changed.
- Be sure that the hot water supplied to fixtures accessible to children does not exceed a maximum temperature of 120° F.

How to wash hands

- Check to be sure a paper towel is available. Turn on water to a comfortable temperature.
- Moisten hands with water and apply heavy lather of *liquid* soap.
- Wash well under running water for at least 10 seconds.
- Pay particular attention to areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, and backs of hands.
- Rinse well under running water until free of soap and dirt. Hold hands so that water flows from wrist to fingertips.
- Dry hands with paper towel.
- Use paper towel to turn off faucet; then discard towel.
- Use hand lotion, if desired.

Infants/toddlers

Use soap and water at a sink if you can. If a baby is too heavy to hold for handwashing at the sink, use disposable wipes or follow this procedure:

- Wipe the child's hands with a damp paper towel moistened with a drop of liquid soap.
- Wipe the child's hands with a paper towel wet with clear water.
- Dry the child's hands with a paper towel.

Older children

- Squirt a drop of liquid soap on children's hands.
- Wash and rinse their hands in running water, directing flow from wrist to fingertips.
- Dry hands with paper towel.
- Turn off faucet with paper towel and discard.
- Teach older children to carry out the procedure themselves. Supervise younger children in carrying out this handwashing procedure.

Appendix C
Nutrition

Food components for infants

0–3 MONTHS	4–7 MONTHS	8–11 MONTHS
	MORNING	
4-6 fluid oz. breast milk or iron-fortified formula	4-8 fluid oz. breast milk or iron-fortified formula	6-8 fluid oz. breast milk, iron-fortified formula, or whole cow's milk
	0-3 tablespoons dry, iron-fortified infant cereal (optional before 6 months, but introduce by 6 months)	1-4 tablespoons fruit of appropriate consistency
		2-4 tablespoons dry, iron-fortified infant cereal
	MID-DAY	
4-6 fluid oz. breast milk or iron-fortified formula	4-8 fluid oz. breast milk or iron fortified formula	6-8 fluid oz. breast milk, iron-fortified formula, or whole cow's milk
	0-3 tablespoons dry, iron-fortified infant cereal (optional—see above)	1-4 tablespoons fruit *and/or* vegetable of appropriate consistency
	0-3 tablespoons strained fruit and/or vegetable (optional, but if introduced, introduce as close to 6 months as possible)	2-4 tablespoons dry, iron-fortified infant cereal *and/or* 1-4 tablespoons fish, lean meat, poultry, or cooked dry beans or peas (all of appropriate consistency), *or* ½ to 1½ oz. cheese *or* 1-3 oz. cottage cheese *or* 1 egg yolk (introduce at 11 months of age)
	SUPPLEMENT SNACK	
4-6 fluid oz. breast milk or iron-fortified formula	4-6 fluid oz. breast milk or iron-fortified formula	2-4 fluid oz. breast milk, iron-fortified formula, or whole cow's milk, *or* 2 oz. full-strength fruit juice
		0-½ slice hard toast or 0-2 crackers or teething biscuits (optional) suitable for infants, made from whole-grain or enriched flour

Note—On the infant's arrival at the facility, the caregiver must ascertain what foods and/or formula the infant was fed at home in order to determine the infant's nutritional needs.

* Lean meat is beef, pork, or veal without visible fat. Luncheon meats and frankfurters are high in fat and are *not* considered lean meat.

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Food components for toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children

Breakfast	**1-2 years**	**3-5 years**	**6-12 years**
Milk, fluid	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
Juice (full-strength) *or* fruit or vegetable	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Bread *and/or* cereal (whole-grain or enriched)			
Bread	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice
Cereal			
Cold/dry *or*	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Hot/cooked	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Lunch or Supper			
Milk, fluid	½ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
Lean meat* *or* meat alternate			
Lean meat, fish, or poultry cooked (lean meat without bone)	1 ounce	1½ ounces	2 ounces
or Cheese	1 ounce	1½ ounces	2 ounces
or Egg	1	1	1
or Cooked dry beans or peas	¼ cup	⅜ cup	½ cup
or Peanut butter (smooth)	2 tablespoons	3 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
or Nuts and/or seeds**	½ ounce**	¾ ounce**	1 ounce**
Fruit and/or vegetable (two or more total)	¼ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
Bread or bread alternate (whole grain or enriched)	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice
Supplement (Snack)—Select two of the four components (midmorning or midafternoon supplement)			
Milk, fluid	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup
Lean meat* or meat alternate (see above) *or* yogurt	½ ounce ¼ cup	½ ounce ¼ cup	1 ounce ½ cup
Juice (full-strength) *or* fruit *or* vegetable	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Bread *and/or* cereal (whole-grain or enriched)			
Bread	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice
Cereal			
Cold/Dry or	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Hot/cooked	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup

Note — On the child's arrival at the facility, the caregiver must ascertain what food was fed at home in order to determine the child's nutritional needs.

* Lean meat is beef, pork, or veal without visible fat. Luncheon meats and frankfurters are high in fat and are *not* considered lean meat.

** This portion can meet only one half of the total serving of the meat/meat alternate requirement for lunch or supper. Nuts or seeds must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to fulfill the requirement. For determining combinations, 1 ounce of nuts or seeds is equal to 1 ounce of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish. CAUTION: Children under five are at the highest risk of choking. Any nuts and/or seeds must be served to them in a prepared food and be ground or finely chopped.

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Appendix D
Guidelines for Food Preparation and Service

Guidelines for food preparation and service

These procedures for food preparation and service can be used by cooks and others involved with food service.

Food purchasing

- Be sure that suppliers of food and beverages meet local, state, and federal codes.
- Be sure that the meats and poultry you purchase have been inspected and passed for wholesomeness by federal or state inspectors.
- Use only pasteurized milk and milk products. If you use dry milk, prepare it in a clean container and refrigerate or use it immediately.
- Do not use home-canned foods or food from dented, rusted, or bulging cans or cans without labels.

Food storage

- Store all perishable foods at temperatures that will prevent spoilage (refrigerator temperature, 45° F. or lower; freezer temperature, 0° F. or lower).
- Place thermometers in the warmest part of the refrigerator and freezer (near the door) and check them daily.
- Set up refrigerators so that there is enough shelf space to allow for air circulation around shelves and refrigerator walls. This will help maintain proper food temperatures.
- Always examine food when it arrives to make sure it is not spoiled, dirty, or infested with insects.
- Store unrefrigerated foods in clean, rodent- and insect-proof, covered metal, glass, or hard plastic containers. (Large shortening cans available from bakeries are ideal for storing flour and other commodities.)
- Store containers of food above the floor (about 6") on racks or other clean slotted surfaces that permit air circulation.
- Keep storerooms dry and free from leaky plumbing or drainage problems. Repair all holes and cracks in storerooms to prevent insect and rodent infestation.
- Keep storerooms cool (about 60° F.) to increase the food's shelf life.
- Store all food items separately from nonfood items.
- Use an inventory system: **The first food stored is the first food used.** This will ensure that stored food is rotated. Inspect food daily for spoilage.

Preparing and handling infant formula and foods sent from home. **Always** wash hands and utensils before handling breast milk, infant formulas, and foods. Be sure to follow directions on the packages regarding shelf life and preparation. If breast milk or formula is to be warmed, bottles should be placed in a pan of hot (not boiling) water for 5 minutes; shaken well; and, the milk temperature should be tested before feeding. Special care should be taken in cleaning and/or disinfecting bottles and nipples.

- Breast milk—Any breast milk sent from home should be in the infant's bottle with the child's name and the date. Breast milk should be refrigerated for a maximum of 48 hours. Breast milk may be frozen. The container in which the milk is collected and frozen, as well as the type of storage used (i.e., freezer unit of the refrigerator, self-contained freezer, or standing deep freeze) appear to affect the length of time breast milk may be safely stored. Frozen breast milk should be thawed under running cold water or in the refrigerator. Do not refreeze previously frozen breast milk.
- Concentrated infant formula—This should be sent from the child's home in its original, factory-sealed container and reconstituted according to package directions. Refrigerate until immediately prior to use. Never reuse a bottle of milk that has been warmed and/or used to feed an infant.
- Ready-to-feed infant formula—This can be served as is, unless parents provide instructions for a special formula preparation. Accept only factory-sealed containers.
- Powdered formula—Reconstitute as directed on the container.

- Junior foods–Serve commercially prepared junior foods from a **serving dish,** not the food jar. Cover, date, and refrigerate open jars of junior foods and use the contents within 48 hours.

Food preparation and handling

- Wash all raw fruits and vegetables before use. Wash tops of cans before opening.
- Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator or put quick-thaw foods in plastic bags under cold running water for immediate preparation. DO NOT thaw frozen foods by allowing them to stand at room temperature.
- Use a thermometer to check internal temperatures of the following foods to be sure they have been cooked evenly:
  - –Poultry–heat to a minimum temperature of 165° F.
  - –Stuffing–heat to a minimum temperature of 165° F. in a **separate** pan. (**Do not** cook stuffing inside poultry.)
  - –Pork and pork products–heat to a minimum of 160° F.
- Prepare these potentially hazardous foods as quickly as possible from chilled products, serve immediately, and refrigerate leftovers immediately.
  - –meat salads, poultry salads, egg salads, seafood salads, and potato salads
  - –cream-filled pastries
  - –other prepared foods containing milk, meat, poultry, fish, and/or eggs
- Prevent the growth of bacteria by maintaining all potentially hazardous foods at temperatures lower than 45° F. or higher than 140° F. during transportation and while holding until service. Bacteria multiply most rapidly between 45° and 140° F.
- Cover or completely wrap foods during transportation.
- Never reuse a spoon that has been used even once for tasting.
- Make sure each serving bowl has a spoon or other utensil for serving food.
- Reserve food for second serving times at safe temperatures in the kitchen.
- Leftover food from serving bowls on the table must be thrown away with these possible exceptions
  - –raw fruit and vegetables that can be thoroughly washed
  - –packaged foods that do not spoil
- Place foods to be stored for reuse in shallow pans and refrigerate or freeze immediately to rapidly bring temperature to 45° F. or lower.
- Leftovers or prepared casseroles held in the refrigerator must be discarded after 2 days.
- Leftover foods should not be sent home with children or adults because of the hazards of bacterial growth during transport.
- Keep lunches brought from home in the refrigerator until lunch time.

Storage of nonfood supplies

- Store all cleaning supplies (including cleaning agents) and other poisonous materials in **locked** compartments or in compartments well above the reach of children and separate from food, dishes, and utensils.
- Store poisonous and toxic materials, other than those needed for kitchen sanitation, in **locked** compartments **outside** the kitchen area.
- Store insect and rodent poisons in **locked** compartments in an area apart from cleaning materials to avoid contamination or mistaken usage.
- Bait put into food storage areas should be boxed and separated to prevent a possible contamination of food supplies.
- Clearly label all containers of poisonous material as poison and include information on appropriate antidotes.

Cleaning and care of equipment

- Cracked or chipped dishes or utensils may harbor bacteria. Throw them away. Avoid utensils with chipped or painted handles.
- Wash dishes using an approved method
- Wash equipment frequently.
  - –Clean range tops during food preparation as needed and on a daily basis.
  - –Clean ovens and overhead hoods at least weekly.
  - –Wash the inside and outside of refrigerators weekly with the bleach solution; defrost when ice is a ¼" thick.
  - –Wash tables with the bleach solution before and after each meal.
- Set up a cleaning schedule to prevent contamination of food as follows:
  - –Wet mop **floors** daily; scrub as needed.
  - –Wash and disinfect **food preparation surfaces** between preparation of different food items (e.g., meat and salad) and between different meats (e.g., pork and chicken).
  - –Wash and disinfect **cutting boards** after cutting any single meat, fish, or poultry item. (Use only hard, nontoxic, nonwood boards that are free of cracks, crevices, and open seams.)
  - –Wash and disinfect **can openers** daily.

–Clean and disinfect **utensils** between use on different food items.

- Special notes
  - –**Air dry all food contact surfaces** after cleaning and disinfecting. Do not use wiping cloths.
  - –Make sure no food contact surfaces are made of cadmium, lead, zinc, granite enamelware, or other toxic materials.
  - –Do not use cyanide to polish or clean silver.
  - –Be sure that there are sufficient garbage cans to hold all garbage. These cans should have tight-fitting lids and be leakproof. Line garbage cans with plastic liners; empty and clean the cans frequently. Keep the garbage area clean at all times.

Insect and rodent control

- For flying insects, use only approved pyrethrin-based insecticides or a flyswatter in the food preparation areas. Use products in accordance with directions and cautions appearing on their labels. Do not allow insecticides to come in contact with raw or cooked food, utensils, or equipment used in food preparation and serving or with any other food contact surface. Do not use insect strips that hang from the ceiling.
- Insecticides for crawling insects should be applied only by certified insect control personnel. A staff member should monitor where the insecticides are applied to be certain that food preparation surfaces or child contact areas are not contaminated.
- Be sure all doors and windows have screens in good condition. Keep screens closed at all times. Close all openings to the outside to prevent rodents and insects from entering.

Appendix E

NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment

Preamble

NAEYC recognizes that many daily decisions required of those who work with young children are of a moral and ethical nature. The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct offers guidelines for responsible behavior and sets forth a common basis for resolving the principal ethical dilemmas encountered in early childhood care and education. The primary focus is on daily practice with children and their families in programs for children from birth through 8 years of age, such as infant/toddler programs, preschools, child care centers, family child care homes, kindergartens, and primary classrooms. Many of the provisions also apply to specialists who do not work directly with children, including program administrators, parent and vocational educators, college professors, and child care licensing specialists.

Core values

Standards of ethical behavior in early childhood care and education are based on commitment to core values that are deeply rooted in the history of our field. We have committed ourselves to

- Appreciating childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle
- Basing our work with children on knowledge of child development
- Appreciating and supporting the close ties between the child and family
- Recognizing that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture, community, and society
- Respecting the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, and colleague)
- Helping children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust, respect, and positive regard

Conceptual framework

The Code sets forth a conception of our professional responsibilities in four sections, each addressing an arena of professional relationships: (1) children, (2) families, (3) colleagues, and (4) community and society. Each section includes an introduction to the primary responsibilities of the early childhood practitioner in that arena, a set of ideals pointing in the direction of exemplary professional practice, and a set of principles defining practices that are required, prohibited, and permitted.

The ideals reflect the aspirations of practitioners. **The principles** are intended to guide conduct and assist practitioners in resolving ethical dilemmas encountered in the field. There is not necessarily a corresponding principle for each ideal. Both ideals and principles are intended to direct practitioners to those questions which, when responsibly answered, will provide the basis for conscientious decisionmaking. While the Code provides specific direction and suggestions for addressing some ethical dilemmas, many others will require the practitioner to combine the guidance of the Code with sound professional judgment.

The ideals and principles in this Code present a shared conception of professional responsibility that affirms our commitment to the core values of our field. The Code publicly acknowledges the responsibilities that we in the field have assumed and in so doing supports ethical behavior in our work. Practitioners who face ethical dilemmas are urged to seek guidance in the applicable parts of this Code and in the spirit that informs the whole.

Ethical dilemmas always exist

Often, "the right answer"—the best ethical course of action to take—is not obvious. There may be no readily apparent, positive way to handle a situation. One important value may contradict another. When we are caught "on the horns of a dilemma," it is our professional responsibility to consult with all relevant parties in seeking the most ethical course of action to take.

Section I: Ethical responsibilities to children

Childhood is a unique and valuable stage in the life cycle. Our paramount responsibility is to provide safe, healthy, nurturing, and responsive settings for children. We are committed to support children's development, respect individual differences, help children learn to live and work cooperatively, and promote health, self-awareness, competence, self-worth, and resiliency.

Ideals:

I-1.1—To be familiar with the knowledge base of early childhood care and education and to keep current through continuing education and in-service training.

I-1.2—To base program practices upon current knowledge in the field of child development and related disciplines and upon particular knowledge of each child.

I-1.3—To recognize and respect the uniqueness and the potential of each child.

I-1.4—To appreciate the special vulnerability of children.

I-1.5—To create and maintain safe and healthy settings that foster children's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development and that respect their dignity and their contributions.

I-1.6—To support the right of each child to play and learn in inclusive early childhood programs to the fullest extent consistent with the best interests of all involved. As with adults who are disabled in the larger community, children with disabilities are ideally served in the same settings in which they would participate if they did not have a disability.

I-1.7—To ensure that children with disabilities have access to appropriate and convenient support services and to advocate for the resources necessary to provide the most appropriate settings for all children.

Principles:

P-1.1—Above all, we shall not harm children. We shall not participate in practices that are disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitative, intimidating, emotionally damaging, or physically harmful to children. This principle has precedence over all others in this Code.

P-1.2—We shall not participate in practices that discriminate against children by denying benefits, giving special advantages, or excluding them from programs or activities on the basis of their race, ethnicity, religion, sex, national origin, language, ability, or the status, behavior, or beliefs of their parents. (This principle does not apply to programs that have a lawful mandate to provide services to a particular population of children.)

P-1.3—We shall involve all of those with relevant knowledge (including staff and parents) in decisions concerning a child.

P-1.4—For every child we shall implement adaptations in teaching strategies, learning environment, and curricula, consult with the family, and seek recommendations from appropriate specialists to maximize the potential of the child to benefit from the program. If, after these efforts have been made to work with a child and family, the child does not appear to be benefiting from a program, or the child is seriously jeopardizing the ability of other children to benefit from the program, we shall communicate with the family and appropriate specialists to determine the child's current needs; identify the setting and services most suited to meeting these needs; and assist the family in placing the child in an appropriate setting.

P-1.5—We shall be familiar with the symptoms of child abuse, including physical, sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse, and neglect. We shall know and follow state laws and community procedures that protect children against abuse and neglect.

P-1.6—When we have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, we shall report it to the appropriate community agency and follow up to ensure that appropriate action has been taken. When appropriate, parents or guardians will be informed that the referral has been made.

Section III: Ethical responsibilities to colleagues

In a caring, cooperative work place, human dignity is respected, professional satisfaction is promoted, and positive relationships are modeled. Based upon our core values, our primary responsibility in this arena is to establish and maintain settings and relationships that support productive work and meet professional needs. The same ideals that apply to children are inherent in our responsibilities to adults.

A—Responsibilities to co-workers

Ideals:

I-3A.1—To establish and maintain relationships of respect, trust, and cooperation with co-workers.

I-3A.2—To share resources and information with co-workers.

I-3A.3—To support co-workers in meeting their professional needs and in their professional development.

I-3A.4—To accord co-workers due recognition of professional achievement.

Principles:

P-3A.1—When we have concern about the professional behavior of a co-worker, we shall first let that person know of our concern, in a way that shows respect for personal dignity and for the diversity to be found among staff members, and then attempt to resolve the matter collegially.

P-3A.2—We shall exercise care in expressing views regarding the personal attributes or professional conduct of co-workers. Statements should be based on firsthand knowledge and relevant to the interests of children and programs.

B—Responsibilities to employers

Ideals:

I-3B.1—To assist the program in providing the highest quality of service.

I-3B.2—To do nothing that diminishes the reputation of the program in which we work unless it is violating laws and regulations designed to protect children or the provisions of this Code.

Principles:

P-3B.1—When we do not agree with program policies, we shall first attempt to effect change through constructive action within the organization.

P-3B.2—We shall speak or act on behalf of an organization only when authorized. We shall take care to acknowledge when we are speaking for the organization and when we are expressing a personal judgment.

P-3B.3—We shall not violate laws or regulations designed to protect children and shall take appropriate action consistent with this Code when aware of such violations.

C—Responsibilities to employees

Ideals:

I-3C.1—To promote policies and working conditions that foster mutual respect, competence, well-being, and positive self-esteem in staff members.

I-3C.2—To create a climate of trust and candor that will enable staff to speak and act in the best interests of children, families, and the field of early childhood care and education.

I-3C.3—To strive to secure equitable compensation (salary and benefits) for those who work with or on behalf of young children.

Principles:

P-3C.1—In decisions concerning children and programs, we shall appropriately utilize the education, training, experience, and expertise of staff members.

P-3C.2—We shall provide staff members with safe and supportive working conditions that permit them to carry out their responsibilities, timely and nonthreatening evaluation procedures, written grievance procedures, constructive feedback, and opportunities for continuing professional development and advancement.

P-3C.3—We shall develop and maintain comprehensive written personnel policies that define program standards and, when applicable, that specify the extent to which employees are accountable for their conduct outside the work place. These policies shall be given to new staff members and shall be available for review by all staff members.

P-3C.4—Employees who do not meet program standards shall be informed of areas of concern and, when possible, assisted in improving their performance.

P-3C.5—Employees who are dismissed shall be informed of the reasons for their termination. When a dismissal is for cause, justification must be based on evidence of inadequate or inappropriate behavior that is accurately documented, current, and available for the employee to review.

P-3C.6—In making evaluations and recommendations, judgments shall be based on fact and relevant to the interests of children and programs.

P-3C.7—Hiring and promotion shall be based solely on a person's record of accomplishment and ability to carry out the responsibilities of the position.

P-3C.8—In hiring, promotion, and provision of training, we shall not participate in any form of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, national origin, culture, disability, age, or sexual preference. We shall be familiar with and observe laws and regulations that pertain to employment discrimination.

Section IV: Ethical responsibilities to community and society

Early childhood programs operate within a context of an immediate community made up of families and other institutions concerned with children's welfare. Our responsibilities to the community are to provide programs that meet its needs, to cooperate with agencies and professions that share responsibility for children, and to develop needed programs that are not currently available. Because the larger society has a measure of responsibility for the welfare and protection of children, and because of our specialized expertise in child development, we acknowledge an obligation to serve as a voice for children everywhere.

Ideals:

I-4.1—To provide the community with high-quality (age and individually appropriate, and culturally and socially sensitive) education/care programs and services.

I-4.2—To promote cooperation among agencies and interdisciplinary collaboration among professions concerned with the welfare of young children, their families, and their teachers.

I-4.3—To work, through education, research, and advocacy, toward an environmentally safe world in which all children receive adequate health care, food, and shelter, are nurtured, and live free from violence.

I-4.4—To work, through education, research, and advocacy, toward a society in which all young children have access to high-quality education/care programs.

I-4.5—To promote knowledge and understanding of young children and their needs. To work toward greater social acknowledgment of children's rights and greater social acceptance of responsibility for their well-being.

I-4.6—To support policies and laws that promote the well-being of children and families, and to oppose those that impair their well-being. To participate in developing policies and laws that are needed, and to cooperate with other individuals and groups in these efforts.

I-4.7—To further the professional development of the field of early childhood care and education and to strengthen its commitment to realizing its core values as reflected in this Code.

Principles:

P-4.1—We shall communicate openly and truthfully about the nature and extent of services that we provide.

P-4.2—We shall not accept or continue to work in positions for which we are personally unsuited or professionally unqualified. We shall not offer services that we do not have the competence, qualifications, or resources to provide.

P-4.3—We shall be objective and accurate in reporting the knowledge upon which we base our program practices.

P-4.4—We shall cooperate with other professionals who work with children and their families.

P-4.5—We shall not hire or recommend for employment any person whose competence, qualifications, or character makes him or her unsuited for the position.

P-4.6—We shall report the unethical or incompetent behavior of a colleague to a supervisor when informal resolution is not effective.

P-4.7—We shall be familiar with laws and regulations that serve to protect the children in our programs.

P-4.8—We shall not participate in practices which are in violation of laws and regulations that protect the children in our programs.

P-4.9—When we have evidence that an early childhood program is violating laws or regulations protecting children, we shall report it to persons responsible for the program. If compliance is not accomplished within a reasonable time, we will report the violation to appropriate authorities who can be expected to remedy the situation.

P-4-10—When we have evidence that an agency or a professional charged with providing services to children, families, or teachers is failing to meet its obligations, we acknowledge a collective ethical responsibility to report the problem to appropriate authorities or to the public.

P-4.11—When a program violates or requires its employees to violate this Code, it is permissible, after fair assessment of the evidence, to disclose the identity of that program.

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Statement of Commitment

As an individual who works with young children, I commit myself to furthering the values of early childhood education as they are reflected in the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.

To the best of my ability I will

- Ensure that programs for young children are based on current knowledge of child development and early childhood education.
- Respect and support families in their task of nurturing children.
- Respect colleagues in early childhood education and support them in maintaining the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.
- Serve as an advocate for children, their families, and their teachers in community and society.
- Maintain high standards of professional conduct.
- Recognize how personal values, opinions, and biases can affect professional judgment.
- Be open to new ideas and be willing to learn from the suggestions of others.
- Continue to learn, grow, and contribute as a professional.
- Honor the ideals and principles of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.

The Statement of Commitment expresses those basic personal commitments that individuals must make in order to align themselves with the profession's responsibilities as set forth in the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct.

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NAEYC gratefully acknowledges the numerous, specific 1998 Criteria revisions provided by

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Information about NAEYC

NAEYC is . . .

. . . a membership-supported organization of people committed to fostering the growth and development of children from birth through age 8. Membership is open to all who share a desire to serve and act on behalf of the needs and rights of young children.

NAEYC provides . . .

. . . educational services and resources to adults who work with and for children, including

- ***Young Children,*** the journal for early childhood educators
- books, posters, brochures, and videos to expand your knowledge and commitment to young children, with topics including infants, curriculum, research, discipline, teacher education, and parent involvement
- an Annual Conference that brings people together from all over the country to share their expertise and advocate on behalf of children and families
- Week of the Young Child celebrations sponsored by NAEYC Affiliate Groups
- insurance plans for individuals and programs
- public affairs information and access to information available through NAEYC resources and communication systems for knowledgeable advocacy efforts at all levels of government and through the media
- the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a voluntary accreditation system for high-quality programs for children
- the National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development, which offers resources and services to improve professional preparation and development of early childhood educators
- Young Children International to promote international communication and information exchanges

For free information about membership, publications, or other NAEYC services, visit NAEYC's Web site at http://www.naeyc.org

National Association for the Education of Young Children
1509 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036-1426
202-232-8777 800-424-2460 FAX 202-328-1846

Accreditation fee structure

The National Academy of Early Childhood Programs sponsors a national, voluntary accreditation system for early childhood centers and schools. The accreditation system is a non-profit, self-supporting, and permanent project. Its purpose is to improve the quality of early childhood programs in the United States. The ongoing operation of the system is sustained by fees paid by participating programs.

The cost of accreditation varies depending upon the number of children enrolled in the program. Programs occupying different locations, even if administered by a central agency, must apply and be considered separately. A program that has one administrator and that occupies more than one adjacent building is considered one program.

Accreditation Fees

(effective January 1998)

	Application	Validation	TOTAL
Level 1 (60 or fewer children)	**$125**	**$300**	**$425**
Level 2 (61-120)	**$200**	**$450**	**$650**
Level 3 (121-240)	**$250**	**$575**	**$825**
Level 4 (241-360)	**$300**	**$700**	**$1,000**

For each additional 120 children, each fee increases $50.

Accreditation fees are paid at two points in the process.

1. The **application fee** is paid to initiate the process and to receive self-study materials. This fee is determined by the total number of children enrolled regardless of whether they attend on a half-day or full-day basis.

The program receives these self-study materials:

- *Accreditation Criteria & Procedures of the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs*
- *Guide to Accreditation*
- Multiple copies of forms and questionnaires
- Program Description form
- Consultation by telephone
- Subscription to *The Academy Update* newsletter (published three times each year)

2. The **validation fee** is paid if based on the results of the self-study a program decides to pursue accreditation. This fee is determined by the largest number of children attending on a given day. For this fee, the program receives an on-site validation visit and the accreditation decision.

Accreditation is valid for three years. No additional fees are paid during that time.

National Academy of Early Childhood Programs
Order form for accreditation self-study materials

Mail to
National Academy of Early Childhood Programs
NAEYC
1509 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036-1846
202-328-2601 800-424-2460

Name of program _____

Director _____

Address of program _____

_____

_____
City State ZIP + 4

County _____ Telephone _____
(Area Code)

Name and address of administrative agency (if different from above)

❑ Check here if materials should be sent to *this* address.

_____

_____

_____

Program information

Hours of operation _____

Total number of children enrolled in the program _____

Number of classrooms (or clearly defined groups of children, such as a.m. and p.m. groups) _____

Number of staff members working directly with children _____

Do you need the Parent Questionnaire in Spanish? If so, how many copies? _____

Payment of the application fee must accompany this order (see Accreditation fee structure on page 100). Please make check payable to "NAEYC." This order and accompanying application fee entitle the designated program to receive self-study materials from the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs. This fee does *not* entitle the program to an on-site visit or accreditation. If the program wishes to pursue accreditation, the completed Program Description form must be submitted to the Academy with payment of the validation fee.

For NAEYC use

Date _____ Ck. # _____ Amt. $ _____

Program Code _____ Level _____

Accreditation Criteria & Procedures of the National Association for the Education of Young Children

NAEYC administers the nation's largest and most widely recognized voluntary accreditation system for high-quality early childhood programs. Its purpose is to improve the quality of care and education provided for young children and to recognize early childhood programs that function in accordance with the Criteria for High-Quality Early Childhood Programs.

All children who participate in early childhood programs deserve to benefit and grow from the experience. All of their families need the assurance that their children are cared for and educated in the best possible environments.

In this book, early childhood professionals will find the Criteria and procedures for becoming accredited. Early childhood personnel who choose to work toward accreditation for their programs demonstrate a professional commitment to self-evaluation and self-improvement and to young children and their families.

Position Statement of the
National Association for the
Education of Young Children

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